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# The Guardian

EUROPE

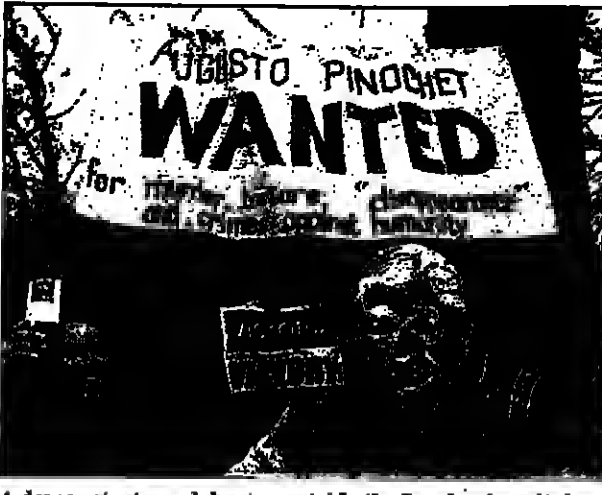
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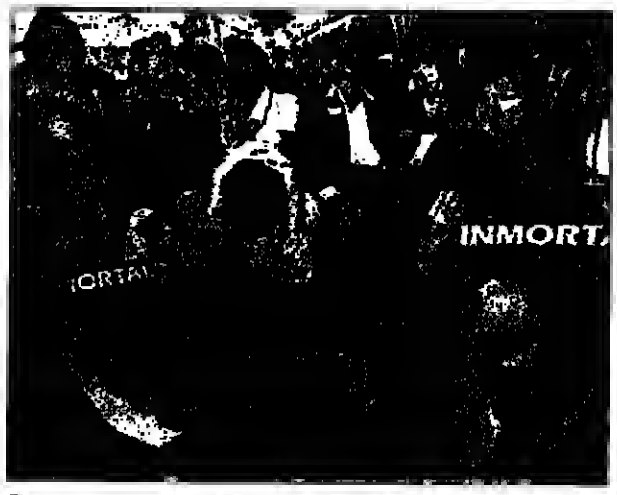
## From London to Santiago the verdict on Pinochet brings anger and joy



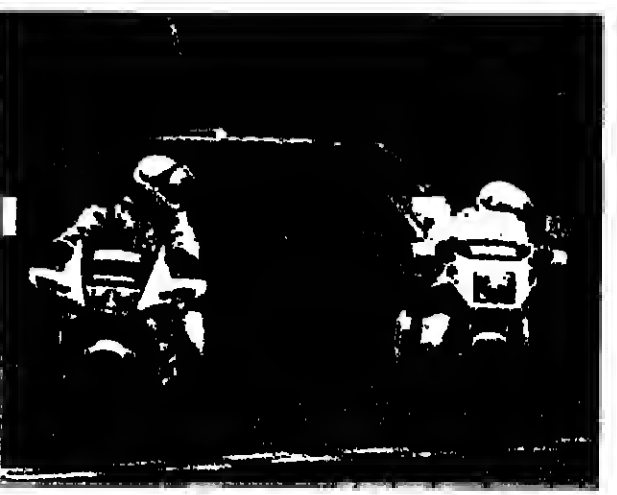
Victims' relatives in Santiago listen anxiously to the ruling



A demonstrator celebrates outside the London hospital



Supporters at Chile's Pinochet Foundation cry in dismay



Police outriders wait outside the clinic's entrance

# Judgment day beckons

## Pressure on Straw to grant appeal for extradition

Michael White and Jamie Wilson

**T**HE Home Secretary, Jack Straw, was last night facing acute pressure to give his consent for extradition proceedings to begin against General Augusto Pinochet after the law lords unexpectedly ruled that the former dictator of Chile is not immune from prosecution for the savage acts committed in his name.

As the government in Santiago promised to fight the action to the bitter end, Downing Street immediately joined forces with Home Office officials to stress that Mr Straw's decision on whether to allow a full hearing at Bow Street magistrates' court, or to send Pinochet home, will be taken in a quasi-judicial capacity, not a political one.

The distinction is often a fine one, and the current campaign to hold the world's more bloodthirsty dictators to account for crimes against humanity will be hard for the Home Secretary to ignore as legal submissions flood in from both sides in the next few days.

Few Labour MPs at Westminster last night believed that Mr Straw, himself a barrister, has any choice but to endorse yesterday's 3-2 ruling. It was made from the red leather benches of the House

of Lords just 24 hours after the rituals and controversy of the Queen's Speech.

Yesterday's drama was heightened because the first two law lords to speak — Lords Lloyd and Slynn — confirmed the High Court decision in October that the general, who ruled Chile from 1973 to 1990, enjoys "sovereign immunity" as a former head of state.

Only when Lords Slynn and Hoffman (both South Africans), and in a crucial surprise, Lord Nicholls, gave their opinions did gasps of astonishment come from the public gallery.

In the defining moment, 69-year-old Lord Nicholls ruled that no one, not even a head of state, could get away with certain abhorrent crimes. "International law has made plain that certain types of conduct, including torture and hostage-taking, are not acceptable conduct on the part of anyone," he said.

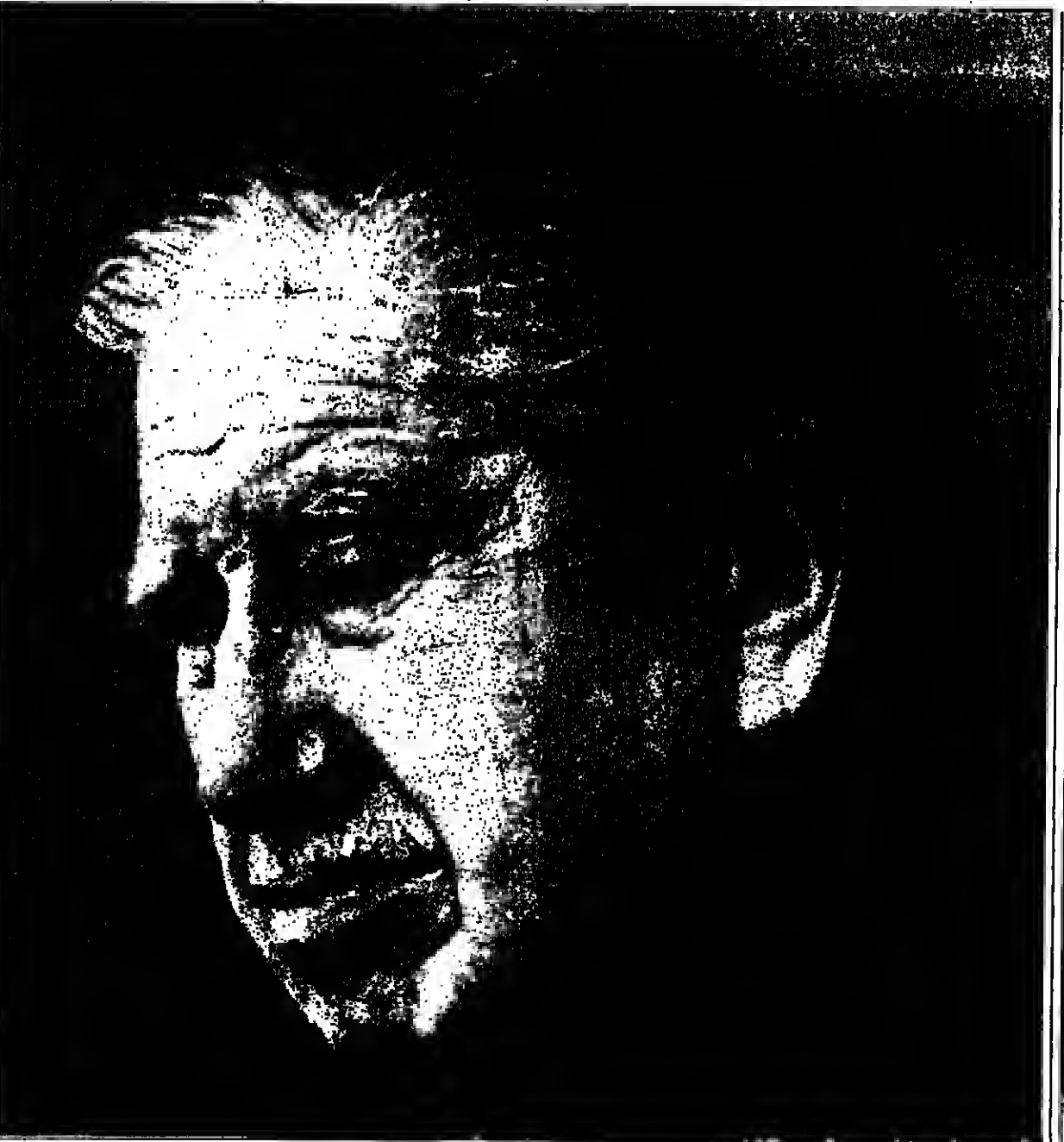
Between now and next Wednesday, unless magistrates grant extra time, the Home Secretary will act under the terms of the 1989 Extradition Act, signed by both Britain and Spain, where a magistrate triggered the crisis by accusing Pinochet of genocide and torture.

There was jubilation among Chilean exile groups in London and across Europe. The French National Assembly broke into spontaneous applause on hearing the news, which some analysts predict will create a new climate of accountability in international law.

Others fear a chaotic crop of tit-for-tat legal actions around the world. "It's great politics, but bad law," said one left-wing Labour barrister. "John Major could be arrested in America at the behest of Saddam Hussein," warned a Tory ex-minister.

The delight of the left was matched by the reciprocal vehemence of the pro-Pinochet lobby, led by his old ally, Baroness Thatcher. She insisted that the general, whose 33rd birthday fell yesterday, was too "old, frail and sick" to go on trial.

Pinochet, now in Grovelands Priory Hospital, north London, should be allowed



General Augusto Pinochet does not have immunity from arrest, the law lords ruled yesterday. PHOTOGRAPH: SANTIAGO LLANQUIN

home on compassionate grounds, she argued. William Hague agreed and accused the government of incompetence.

Compassion is one of the four grounds on which Mr Straw, who had not yet read the law lords' ruling last night, could intervene. The others are less subjective, and seek to establish whether the alleged offences are extraditable, whether they were political in nature, and — a bone of extradition battles — whether the papers in the case are in order.

If Mr Straw gives the nod to extradition proceedings, the battle is far from over. Should the general lose the fight, his lawyers will appeal to the law lords before he is flown to Spain. The final decision could then be in Mr Straw's lap again. It will all take months.

### A testimony of horror

**Extract from the Spanish warrant for the extradition of General Pinochet:**

"The most usual method was 'the grill' consisting of a metal table on which the victim was laid naked and his extremities tied and electrical shocks were applied to the lips, genitals, wounds or metal prosthesis; also two persons, relatives or friends, were placed in two metal drawers one on top of the other so that when the one above was tortured the psychological impact was felt by the other; on other occasions the victim was suspended from a bar by the wrists and/or the knees, and over a prolonged period while held in this situation electric current was applied to him, cutting wounds were inflicted or he was beaten; or the 'dry submarine' method was applied, ie placing a bag on the head until close to suffocation, also drugs were used and boiling water was thrown on various detainees to punish them as a foretaste for the death which they would later suffer."

The Pinochet affair, pages 2, 3. Leader comment, page 9

The engines revved as the general sat waiting to make his final getaway

Nick Hopkins and Jamie Wilson

**G**ENERAL Pinochet was feeling quite buoyant in the minutes before the House of Lords judgment began, and had asked to sit close to the ambulance which had been requisitioned to spirit him away.

With his daughter Lucia and a number of Chilean senators fussing over him at the Grovelands Priory hospital in Southgate, north London, the talk was of returning home, where it is the middle of summer, and getting out of the miserable cold.

Pinochet didn't intend to linger a moment longer than was necessary once the verdict came. The police, too, seemed to

know he was on his way. As 2pm approached, the outriders which were to escort him to a plane at RAF Brize Norton in Oxfordshire were revving their engines, and the 40 police officers positioned outside the clinic to keep an eye on the 30 noisy demonstrators began to nudge and wink.

"Get ready," confided one rather excitedly. "We've just been told... the release is imminent."

The protesters sensed all was lost as the officers fanned out, and when word spread that the five law lords had entered the chamber, the singing and drum banging which had started five hours before stopped.

At Westminster, there was fidgeting on the wool-sack.

The chairman of the panel, Lord Slynn, rose first. His verdict was pithy. "I would hold that the respondent as a former head of state is immune from arrest."

Lord Lloyd was also abrupt, deflating the protesters gathered in the public gallery.

"In my opinion the state of Chile is entitled to claim immunity for Senator Pinochet," he said.

turn to page 3, column 1

### CRISIS IN CENTRAL AMERICA



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USA D 8.50	UK D 8.50	Yugoslavia D 8.50	

**UK news**

Three-year-old girl missing for more than 24 hours was recovering from her ordeal after being found in a wood.

Page 5

**International**

A New Zealand court dismissed an attempt by the British government to stop a former SAS soldier talking about his past exploits.

Page 6



Who's

Battle of the breakfast babies



# The Pinochet affair

## Straw's search for peace in his time

**Political dilemma:** The next steps. **Jamie Wilson, Clare Dyer and Ewen Macaskill report**

**Y**ESTERDAY'S decision by the House of Lords that General Augusto Pinochet does not have immunity from prosecution firmly thrusts the Pinochet affair back into the political arena.

The job of deciding the fate of the 60-year-old former Chilean dictator will now fall to the Home Secretary Jack Straw, who has until December 2 to decide whether to allow the formal Spanish request for extradition to be heard by the courts.

Rumour has been circulating at Westminster for weeks that Mr Straw would allow the general to fly home in defiance of Chile's internal peace process.

Mr Straw and senior legal advisers to the government are said to be keen to end the drama and would use the domestic pact in Chile, whereby left and right agreed to leave Pinochet alone, as justification for allowing him home.

There is also believed to be concern that a decision to extradite the general could leave the Government open to claims of hypocrisy; Britain has no more right to upset the delicate balance of Chile's internally-agreed peace process than the Chileans have to involve themselves in Northern Ireland.



Barbed wire with a message outside the Grovelands Priory Hospital where Pinochet is staying. Right: his eldest son, Augusto Pinochet Hiriart, reacts to the Lords ruling in Santiago



Mr Straw will take four criteria into account when he makes his decision. Whether or not the alleged offences are extradition crimes; if the request has been properly authenticated; if the offences are political (such a ruling prevented former MI6 agent David Sawyer being extradited from France last week); and if there are any compassionate circumstances.

Mr Straw is being advised on his options by a leading QC, James Turner, and is open to representations until November 30.

Lawyers for Pinochet have spent the last two weeks preparing submissions, believed to highlight the ramifications of the Pinochet case on the delicate political situation in Chile.

Britain's extradition process is one of the slowest in the world, and lawyers reckon Pinochet could languish in Britain for at least two years. If Mr Straw allows it to proceed, the matter will return to the magistrates court.

The magistrate will consider whether the crime is an extraditable — an offence which warrants at least 12 months in prison — whether it is a crime in Britain and Spain, and whether the offences are political offences.

If the magistrate remands Pinochet in custody to await extradition, he can apply for habeas corpus (an application for release on the grounds of unlawful detention).

Repeated applications for habeas corpus delayed the extradition of Loran Osman, accused of fraud in Hong Kong, for seven years and for four years the extradition of the British Bhagwan women, Susan Hagan and Sally-Anne Croft to stand trial in the US.

So far Pinochet has made one application for habeas corpus, as well as judicial review, but there is likely to be plenty of scope for more as the extradition process goes on. Once the legal process is exhausted, if Pinochet has been unsuccessful the Home Secretary will again have a discretion whether or not to surrender him.

He could decide not to do so on the grounds of old age or poor health, but again his discretion would be subject to Britain's international treaty obligations and any refusal to surrender could be open to judicial review.

If Mr Straw decides next week that Pinochet should not be extradited to Spain he will find himself in conflict with the majority of the Labour Party, both among his cabinet colleagues and with grassroots support.

Many members of the Cabinet were among Pinochet's most ardent critics while he was in power. When the general was arrested on October 16 word went out that the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, was privately "delighted".

Trade Secretary Peter Mandelson went one step further, declaring in an interview that it would be "gut wrenching" to see Pinochet granted diplomatic immunity.

But while the Labour Party was for the first time united behind Mr Mandelson, a few days later reality was beginning to set in at Downing Street. A major diplomatic incident was looming and the order went out that ministers should refrain from making personal comments about the affair and treat it as a purely judicial matter.

Yesterday an aide for Mr Mandelson said he would not be commenting on the law lords' ruling. Asked why Mr Mandelson had commented at the time of the arrest, the spokesman said Mr Mandelson's phrase "gut wrenching" had referred to Pinochet's grounds for claiming diplomatic immunity but he had no view on whether he should be extradited.

No-one at Westminster will believe that, just as they will not believe other ministers who claim neutrality.

Yesterday a veteran left-winger, who was not directly involved with the Chilean protesters, warned that Mr Straw could not let Pinochet go.

He added that Mr Straw could easily wash his hands of the affair by saying he would respect the wisdom of the law lords. As for pleas by Pinochet's supporters to release him on compassionate grounds, he could leave that for the Spanish to decide.

A number of ministers have been subject to a disinformation campaign run by supporters of the general. It was alleged that Chile under the rule of Salvador Allende was also subject to gross violations of human rights; a claim roundly rejected by Amnesty International.

Yesterday's decision means that, health permitting, Pinochet will make his first public appearance since his arrest on October 16 at Bow Street magistrates court on December 2.

Last night Pinochet remained at the Grovelands Priory Hospital in north London, although he is almost certain to be moved within the next few days. Friends of the general, including Robin Birley, the stepson of the late Sir James Goldsmith, and Taki Theodoropoulos, the Spectator columnist, are reported to be backing a fund to rent a secure retreat for Pinochet and his staff.

The general's bail conditions stipulate that he can only be moved after agreement with the Metropolitan Police commissioner, lawyers representing the Government of Spain and Bow Street magistrates court.

Read the full Pinochet judgment and have your say on the ruling at the Guardian website: <http://reports.guardian.co.uk/pinochet/>

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## For tyrants round the world, alarm bells start to ring

**International implications:** Decision suggests that Amin and others could now face extradition, **Ian Black reports**

**H**AILED as a "wake-up call to tyrants around the world," the Pinochet judgment could release a flood of demands to extradite former heads of state or others who think they have immunity from prosecution.

Ecstatic human rights activists said Idi Amin, the former Ugandan president, now living in Saudi Arabia, may face calls for punishment for murdering hundreds of thousands of people during his bloody rule in the 1970s.

Indonesia's President Suharto, though still in office, might in theory be targeted for his role in the 1965 coup and subsequent takeover of East Timor. So might "Baby Doc" Duvalier of Haiti, in exile in France.

Only on Tuesday, Belgium's justice ministry said diplomatic immunity would protect Congolese President Laurent Kabila against criminal charges filed against him ahead of a visit to Brussels.

Three lawsuits have been filed accusing Kabila of human rights abuses during his overthrow of dictator Mobutu Sese Seko in May 1997 and in the subsequent war against Rwandan and Ugandan-backed rebels.

Heads of state, serving and former, who might be affected, are few and far between. But yesterday's ruling, on a narrow point of law, has far wider implications.

"International law has long been clear that genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity can be tried in any court, but that has been more a proposition in legal treatises than one which governments were willing to act upon," said Kenneth Roth of the New York-based group Human Rights Watch.

"Britain's decision has made that theoretical legal proposition something that governments are willing to act upon. And the ice is broken not only for heads of state but for other mass murderers."

With a campaign gathering force to indict Saddam Hussein and other Iraqi officials for crimes against humanity, the judgment strengthens the willingness of democratic governments to take human rights crimes out of the realm of diplomacy and leave them to the courts.

"Even if a government is sympathetic to an ex-dictator, if the judiciary is anything like semi-independent, then the kind of thing that has happened in London can happen elsewhere."

So if you were a retired dictator you would have to be pretty certain that the government of the country you wanted to visit had the judiciary under control before you went there. Safe havens are looking dodgier.

Experts dismissed suggestions — put forward by opponents of extraditing Pinochet — that in the wake of the ruling, governments have suffered a blow to their traditional preference for avoiding anything that affects their ability to deal discreetly with other governments: Britain's relations with Chile would clearly have been simpler if the law lords had not ruled as they did yesterday.

The judgment also weakens the realpolitik arguments that governments like to use, at least in private: for example, that insisting too strongly that dictators be punished could make it harder to secure peace or persuade them to surrender power.

Human rights activists point out that the indictments of the Bosnian Serb leaders, Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, helped the parties reach agreement on the Dayton peace accord that ended the war.

The ruling could also boost the prospects of the fledgling International Criminal Court, which is being set up to stamp out the worst human rights abuses and which would specifically have the right to try heads of state. Britain signs up to the court next week.

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# The Pinochet affair

'The ruling offends in an extremely grave fashion the dignity of our country'  
Chilean army statement

## Judges' verdict opens Chile's old wounds

**Reaction:** The ruling sparked scenes of wild delight in Santiago, reports **Elizabeth Love**

**N**EWs of the law lords' ruling against Pinochet sparked dancing in the streets, cheers and hugs among hundreds of delighted Chileans while the former dictator's supporters angrily vowed to continue fighting to bring the ageing general home.

President Eduardo Frei, said the government would fight the Spanish extradition request in court. Santiago's position is that a Chilean citizen cannot be tried in a foreign court for acts committed

in Chile and that Pinochet held diplomatic immunity. Its defence of the senator would concentrate solely on legal issues and not address the charges filed against him by a Spanish judge for the deaths, tortures and disappearances during his 17-year rule.

In a televised address after the ruling, Mr Frei urged Chileans to behave in a "serene and responsible" fashion, adding: "The stability we have built is one of our greatest assets."

He said he would send messages to London and Madrid

today, and would send the Chilean foreign minister, José Miguel Insulza, to both capitals to argue the Chilean government's position. The judgment prompted a meeting of the National Security Council yesterday afternoon.

The Chilean army released a statement noting its "profound frustration indignation and unease" with the ruling, adding: "It offends in an extremely grave fashion the sovereignty and dignity of our country."

The army also said it would work within the framework

of the constitution to achieve Pinochet's return.

Pinochet's arrest polarised Chilean society, which had prided itself on a relatively smooth transition to democracy after a 1980 plebiscite.

In a central Santiago plaza yesterday, more than 500 students, human rights activists and Pinochet opponents cheered and clapped when a youth appeared dressed as a law lord, in a black sheet and a wig fashioned from rolls of cotton. Confetti drifted through the air, commuters honked horns, and the crowd

broke into an ironic rendering of "Happy Birthday".

"You can't imagine the joy I am feeling right now, I've been waiting for this for so many years," said Doribia Luengo, aged 71, whose son was executed by the military regime in 1986. "I said to myself I just can't die until I see that justice is done."

Chileans clustered around televisions throughout the city to hear the ruling, which was broadcast live. Many opened champagne and sang the national anthem.

"The totality of the argu-

ments used by Pinochet supporters have been proven wrong," said Hernán Montenegro, a human rights lawyer.

Across town, grim-faced Pinochet supporters gathered at the Pinochet Foundation, wiping away tears and angrily vowing to bring their hero home. Pinochet's son Augusto told them: "Today there is no doubt that a sectarian political group has triumphed, not this is just one battle and not the war."

The supporters milled about wearing badges that said "Thank you General Pi-

nochet". They held portraits of the grey-haired general which bore one word, "immortal".

"I find the ruling unfair," said Andrea Etcheverry, a businesswoman. "I regret the deaths that occurred early in the Pinochet government but he also brought well-being, peace and progress to the nation."

Rightwing politicians who travelled to London to visit Pinochet described the ruling as an offence to Chile's national sovereignty.

"Today all Chileans feel hu-

milated before a foreign nation," said Pablo Longueira of the National Renovation Party.

In the short term the ruling will only exacerbate tensions between the governing coalition of centre-left parties and the pro-Pinochet right, slowing the passage of legislation.

"While he is out of Chile the right will not want to negotiate about anything else. The best solution right now is for the British government to expel him," said a political analyst, Guillermo Holtzman of the University of Chile.



Anita Gonzalez (left), who lost her husband, two sons and daughters-in-law during the Pinochet regime, hugs her daughter Patricia in Santiago yesterday. PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS BOURNCE

## Activists celebrate 'landmark' with cheers and champagne

**Europe reaction:** Widespread acclaim, but Spanish premier takes a cautious line, report **Rory Carroll and Adela Gooch**

**C**HEERS, tears, dancing and champagne broke out at street parties across the world yesterday as human rights activists celebrated the law lords' decision, hailed by lawyers and political leaders as a historic ruling ensuring no tyrant was safe from justice.

Condemnation from Chilean supporters of Augusto Pinochet and the Conservative Party did not dent the euphoria.

Britain: A cacophony of welcome from human rights groups and MPs fused into a unified appeal to Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, to seize the moment and extradite the former dictator of Chile to Spain.

Amnesty International hailed the decision as marvellous. "Until today English law had been in disrepute. Now, quite clearly, the High Court does not represent English law or international law. The law lords have said that very clearly today," a spokesman said. "We have already asked the Home Secretary to give some indication

of what he is going to do. He has informed our solicitor that he is inclined to see out the judicial process and accept whatever the law lords decide. On that basis I would expect him to steer clear and to allow the extradition process to proceed."

Geoffrey Bindman, a solicitor representing Amnesty and families of Pinochet's alleged victims, said the ruling was the century's most important case in human rights law.

Labour MPs, including Tony Benn, Brian Sedgmore and Jeremy Corbyn, predicted Mr Straw would face enormous pressure to let the extradition go ahead.

The Parliamentary Human Rights Group, chaired by Labour backbencher Ann Clwyd, expressed delight.

Outside the Houses of Parliament, anti-Pinochet protesters opened bottles of champagne and chanted: "Now is the time to pay for your crimes."

"It's wonderful, absolutely wonderful, and on his birthday too," said Alejandro Gatica, aged 42. Mr Gatica, a Chilean exile, said he had lost

his father under the Pinochet regime. "We're going to have a big party tonight."

Dissension came from the Tory leader, William Hague. "It is damaging relations with Chile, a long-standing ally of our country, and causing instability in a country that is now democratic. The right and sensible decision would be for the Home Secretary to use his discretion and allow Senator Pinochet to return to his home country."

Baroness Thatcher, the former prime minister, said: "The Senator is old, frail and sick, and on compassionate grounds alone should be allowed to return to Chile."

"I remain convinced that the national interests of both Chile and Britain would be best served by releasing him, which the Home Secretary has it in his power to do."

The Chilean ambassador to Britain, Mario Arzua, said he hoped a fast-track diplomatic wound would be closed quickly. "This unfortunate situation has come between two very good friends."

Spain: The conservative prime minister, José María Aznar, gave a muted response, promising to "respect the judicial process" while trying to minimise damage to relations with Chile. "We have always stressed our support for the democratic system in Chile."

A spokesman for investigating magistrate Baltasar Garçon, who began the extradition process six weeks ago, said he was "immensely satisfied".

In Madrid, Isabel Allende, daughter of the Chilean president who died during the 1973 coup that brought Pinochet to power, said: "This had become a symbolic case. It goes much further than Chile."

France: Politicians on all sides applauded. Relatives of the "disappeared" said a trial in Paris was now possible. "It's a victory for law and morality," said William Bourdon, the lawyer representing some of the families.

Switzerland: The International Commission of Jurists said a human rights landmark had been set. However, Bernard Bertschi, the prosecutor seeking Pinochet's extradition, repeated criticism of the high levels of evidence demanded by British courts to secure extradition.

Belgium: Adding Belgium to the list of countries that want to try the former dictator, Brussels magistrate Daniel Vermeersch issued an arrest warrant after ruling that a complaint against Pinochet by four Chileans had merit.

## Engines revved, the general waited

continued from page 1

chuet under the State Immunity Act 1978. I therefore dismiss the appeal."

Two-til to Pinochet.

Game over? The cameramen in Southgate seemed to think so and began jockeying for position outside the hospital gates. The protesters launched into song, recognising that defeat was inevitable.

"Fools!" cried one.

In the angry hubbub, they missed the verdict of Lord Nicholls.

"Under the correct interpretation of the law, General Pinochet has no immunity whatsoever."

Quickly, Lord Steyn, a

liberal who had left apartheid South Africa in the mid-1970s, was on his feet.

The chanting in Southgate continued as he spoke.

"Senator Pinochet is not immune from the criminal process of this country, of which extradition forms part," he said.

Three minutes into the hearing, two-til. One to go.

High tension.

Lord Hoffman would settle it. He got to his feet and, like a well-trained thespian, prolonged the agony with a needless preamble.

"I have the advantage of reading in draft the

speeches of my noble learned friends, Lord Nicholls of Birkenhead and Lord Steyn," he said, as Southgate fell quiet again.

He rumbled on.

"I agree with them that Senator Pinochet does not have immunity from prosecution and I therefore, too, would allow the appeal."

It took a few moments for everyone to realise what had happened, but then the chamber reverberated for the second time in 24 hours to the sound of muffled cheers.

The reaction in north London was less restrained.

The only people who could not believe it were

the police, and perhaps Pinochet himself.

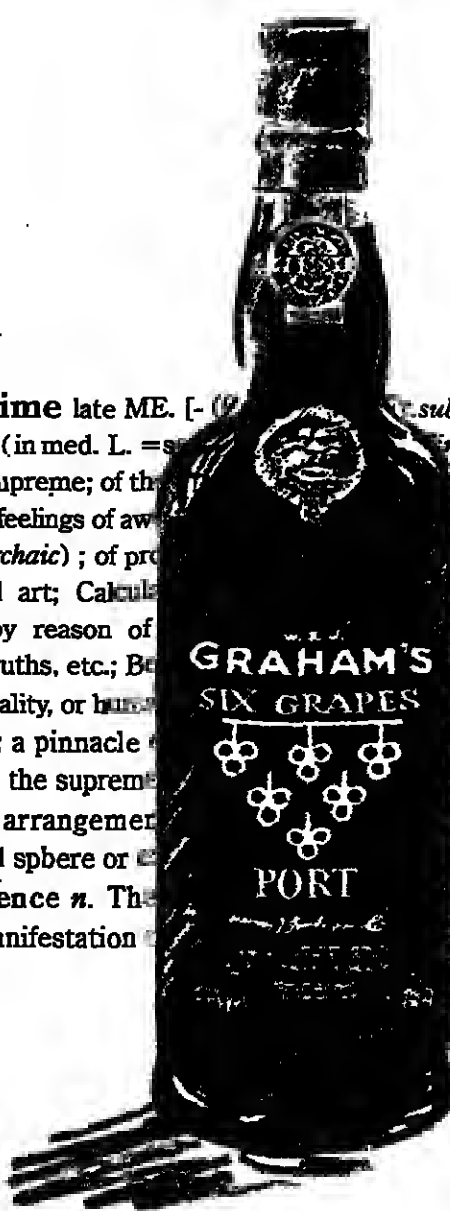
"They've got it wrong," said one of the senior officers outside the hospital, shaking his head dolefully as champagne was sprayed across the pavement. "He's definitely coming out."

But Pinochet stayed put and nobody from his entourage emerged to explain how the former dictator had taken the news.

Half an hour before the ruling was read out, an interpreter had gone from the House of Lords to the Priory to read Pinochet the judgment. The general listened in disbelief. "Can you read it again?" he asked.

W & J.  
**GRAHAM'S**  
ESTABLISHED 1820

Sublime late ME. [-] sublimar or L. sublimare lift up, elevate (in med. L. = sublimis;] 1. adj. exalted, lofty; majestic; supreme; of the highest or noblest nature; awakening feelings of awe; sublimation; raised up, lifted on high (archaic); of profound (literary); Of things in nature and art; Calculated to inspire deep reverence, or lofty emotion, by reason of their grandeur, beauty, or grandeur 1700; Of ideas, truths, etc.; Be the highest regions of thought, reality, or human achievement, surpassing excellence, the supreme achievement, the lofty or grand, in thought, arrangement, or style; 3. n. To raise to an elevated sphere or (spiritually) sublime 1609. Quintessence n. The purest or most perfect form or manifestation of 1570. Quintessence n. a.



*The Quintessential Port.*









## In G2 EUROPE today: Modern, cool, empowering... Is this really Miss World? Decca Aitkenhead reports

Mark Lawson on method acting: The heat is on the stats to die for in Consumer + Online with three pages of IT jobs



**OUT**  
Men  
Behaving  
Badly, with  
Caroline  
Quentin and  
Martin  
Clunes, will  
give way to  
new sitcoms

**IN**  
Mrs Merton  
survives, in a  
new form.  
Caroline  
Aherne's  
new sitcom,  
Mrs Merton  
and Malcolm,  
will be part of  
the initiative

### BBC1 pledges £30m for new star sitcoms to replace old favourites

Janine Gibson  
Media Correspondent

BBC1 controller Peter Salmon will invest £30 million in sitcoms next year in an attempt to find some new hits for the channel as many series near their end.

Long-running hits including *Birds of a Feather*, *One Foot in the Grave* and *Men Behaving Badly* are to be

replaced by new projects from comedians Caroline Aherne, Alan Davies, Dawn French and Jennifer Saunders.

In September, the BBC pledged to improve sitcoms as part of its annual statement to licence fee payers. Of the 12 new series introduced last year, just four will return for a second series. But Mr Salmon said he intends to launch 30 hours of new sitcoms from

new and established performers and writers.

Among the projects he announced yesterday is a French and Saunders sitcom, *Let Them Eat Cake*; Too Much Sun featuring Full Monty star Mark Addy as a British actor aiming for Hollywood success; *Ballykissangel* star Stephen Tomkinson in *Square One* and Caroline Aherne's new sitcom, *Mrs Merton and Malcolm*, based

on a British Gas advertising campaign.

*Birds of a Feather* writers Laurence Marks and Maurice Gran will write one more series of their long-running sitcom *Goodnight Sweetheart*, but have developed two new shows, *Cry Wolf* and *Starting Out*, for BBC1.

Mr Salmon insisted that the older hits would not disappear entirely and that *Men Behaving Badly* and

*Birds of a Feather* would appear occasionally as mini-series or one-offs. He said his new shows would have "new agendas, for new sensibilities and new stars".

Acknowledging BBC1 had experienced "some disappointments on screen", he said: "We've been working very hard off-screen to develop new sitcoms. There is not a net curtain or a cardigan in sight."

## GPs failing to say sorry face 'name and shame'

David Brindle, Social Services Correspondent

FAMILY doctors who refuse to apologise to patients following rulings by the health service ombudsman could be named in a change of policy. The ombudsman, Michael Buckley, yesterday said he was not convinced GPs deserved continued anonymity if, after a fault is discovered, they "just shrug [their] shoulders and walk away".

His warning came as he published reports of two cases where doctors, whom he did not identify, had refused to apologise to patients for striking them off their lists in ways that had been criticised. Although naming GPs could have a serious impact on their practices, the British Medical Association last night indicated it would not oppose such a move by the ombudsman in cases where a ruling was not accepted.

Simon Fradd, joint deputy chair of the association's GPs' committee, said: "The ombudsman has been eminently reasonable in his approach to this issue and if individual GPs choose to disregard a body of professional advice on good practice, they must suffer the consequences."

Complaints about patients being struck off have become a key issue for the ombudsman: although doctors are not legally obliged to give reasons for doing so, professional bodies have the strongest advice that they should.

Mr Buckley said he had previously thought that while it was appropriate for him to identify the NHS trusts he criticised, he should adopt a different approach towards local medical practices because of their smaller size and different relationship

with their patients. However, the behaviour of the GPs in the two cases investigated by his staff had caused him to take stock. He now wanted to hear professional and public views on whether the anonymity policy should change.

In one case, a GP in the Calderdale and Kirkstall health authority area, West Yorkshire, had removed an elderly couple from his patient list after more than 40 years after a complaint about him by their daughter.

Mr Buckley said: "I note with grave concern the practice's comment to me that they had told the woman that she and her family would be removed from the list if she complained." Although the ombudsman upheld the couple's complaint and recommended the GP apologise, the doctor refused.

In the second case, the ombudsman upheld a complaint that a GP in the Ayrshire and Arran health board area had acted precipitately in removing a man from his list after an argument over a prescription. Again, the doctor refused to apologise.

Mr Buckley said: "Candidly, I do not regard it as satisfactory, at the end of what I hope is a thorough inquiry by my office... that a GP can just shrug his or her shoulders and walk away without even saying sorry."

The cases are highlighted in the ombudsman's six-monthly report of investigations. Between April and September, his office received a record number of almost 1,600 complaints.

The report is the first to include complaints about treatment, as well as administrative issues, since the ombudsman's powers were extended in 1995 to include hospital clinical care, GPs and dentists.

### Ombudsman condemns hospital's care of Legionnaire's disease victim

WARRINGTON hospital has become one of the first to be censured for poor clinical care by the NHS ombudsman. Its treatment of a patient who subsequently died was found to be "thoroughly unsatisfactory".

The patient, not named by the ombudsman but identified by the hospital as Patrick McNicholas, had been suffering Legionnaire's disease when admitted in 1995.

The ombudsman found that his drip had become dislodged and had not been put back for two hours, leaving him with bloodstained pyjamas and sheets that showed test results, showing urgent treatment was needed, were not seen or acted upon;

and that he had to wait six hours to be seen by an anaesthetist before he could be transferred to intensive care at another hospital.

When members of the family later attended a meeting to discuss their complaints, they were addressed repeatedly by the wrong name.

The hospital trust told the ombudsman it accepted the standards of care had been "less than optimal". Mike Deegan, the trust's recently-appointed chief executive, said yesterday: "I have offered my sincere apologies to Mr McNicholas's family on behalf of the trust. The care that he received fell short of that which he and his family had a right to expect."

Stormont talks fail to yield breakthrough □ Mallon calls for new deadline amid mounting violence

## Frustrated Blair arrives in Dublin

John Mullan  
Ireland Correspondent

TONY Blair arrived in the Irish Republic last night admitting frustration after meetings with Northern Ireland's political leaders in Belfast failed to plot a way through the peace process threatening the Good Friday Agreement.

He will make history today as the first British prime minister to address both houses of the Irish parliament. He will receive a rousing reception for his role in securing the deal, but will be unable to reveal any initiative to set up the shadow executive and cross-border bodies envisaged in it.

Mr Blair promised: "I am going to do everything I can to push it on, to keep the momentum going." Mr Blair began his meetings at Stormont House as Families Against Intimidation and Terror, an anti-terrorist pressure group, unveiled figures showing paramilitary beatings and shootings were on the rise. "They cited 157 incidents so far this month alone."

Fears for the agreement were underlined as David Trimble, First Minister, and Seamus Mallon, Deputy First Minister, fell out. They even disagreed over how serious the looting was, with Mr Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionists, blaming Mr Mallon, deputy SDLP leader, for labelling it a crisis.

There are two obstacles to progress. One is the long-standing controversy over whether Sinn Féin can partici-



**'The greatest danger we face is lack of movement... I think it is essential that this matter is wrapped up this week or early next week. If not, there is a great danger that the political process will lose credibility'**

Tony Blair with Seamus Mallon, David Trimble and Mo Mowlam at Stormont yesterday  
PHOTOGRAPH: PAUL MURRAY

ipate in the proposed power-sharing executive before the IRA begins to decommission its arms. The other is over the number and scope of government departments in Northern Ireland and north-south institutions.

Ian Paisley, leader of the Democratic Unionist Party, which campaigned against the agreement, said he had asked Mr Blair three times if he would stick to his pledges to ban Sinn Féin from govern-

ment if the IRA failed to start handing in its arms. Mr Paisley said Mr Blair had each time ducked the question.

Bob McCartney, leader of the UK Unionists, who also opposed the agreement, said after meeting Mr Blair: "I got the sense of a very determined man who has not a damn clue of what he will do next."

But, although there is no imminent solution to the issue of Sinn Féin's role, there is progress over the size

of the executive. There is also movement on the bodies to look at cross-border issues.

The Ulster Unionists are keen to limit the number of ministries to seven. There are six Northern Ireland Office departments, and there is agreement that environment will be split into two. This proposal will give Sinn Féin just one seat in the executive. But the DUP is likely to bend to the other parties' demand for 10 ministries, bringing the

executive to 12, including Mr Trimble and Mr Mallon.

Mr Mallon believes that unless a deadline is imposed, violence may fill the political vacuum. After the multi-party talks broke up in disarray last Christmas, Northern Ireland suffered a spate of vicious sectarian murder.

He said: "The greatest danger we face is lack of movement... I think it is essential that this matter is wrapped up this week or early next

## Charges 'expected soon' as Charlotte found safe

David Ward

CHARLOTTE Jones was safe and well in hospital last night after being found crying in a wood four miles from her home in Warrington, Cheshire, 28 hours after she disappeared.

As Charlotte, aged three, recovered from her ordeal, her mother Michelle, aged 24, was being held for questioning by detectives.

Doctors said Charlotte had many scratches and was suffering from exposure but was otherwise well. Police had feared she could not live through another night in the open.

Ms Jones is believed to have led two officers to Gypsy Wood near Newton-le-Willows, Merseyside, where Charlotte was found at 8.30pm on Monday after a search involving divers, dogs, a helicopter and hundreds of volunteers had failed to find any trace of her.

PC Janet Critchley and Detective Constable Mark Toker found Charlotte near an over-

grown path. They heard her whimpering and called out her name.

"We were searching a dense area of a wood, which was very dark and difficult under foot," said Ms Critchley, a Cheshire police child protection officer, at a press conference yesterday.

"I wasn't a pain cry, it was a distress cry. She was distressed and upset and just wanted to be cuddled. We were elated to find her - very emotional."

Ms Critchley, aged 29 and the mother of a four-year-old son, said she was surprised that Charlotte, who did not appear to have moved, had survived her ordeal so well.

"She's obviously a very resilient girl and hardy. She was in the centre of the wood, surrounded by bushes, nettles and bracken. She just wanted to be picked up and loved."

PC Toker picked her up from the brambles and smuggled her under his coat.

The officers took her across the road to Toll Bar Cottage, the home of Bill Ashcroft.

"As I walked in from the kitchen, the police officer was sitting on a chair and he had the little girl in his arms," said Mr Ashcroft. "She was facing him, keeping a tight hold, with her head buried in his shoulder."

"I asked: 'Is that the little girl who has been lost?' I was really stunned and had a lump in my throat. The little girl didn't make a sound. She turned and looked at me and I could see from her face that she was scared."

The officers took her to Warrington hospital, where consultant paediatrician Nick Wild said Charlotte was cold and wet when she arrived at the hospital. "She was hungry and thirsty and in a little bit of distress."

"She hasn't been able to speak to us about it yet but she's been quite chatty to the nursing staff on the ward."

He said: "Charlotte's body temperature was low and she had many scratches and abrasions to her face, hands, legs and feet. She had probably taken off her shoes and socks and had suffered exposure injuries."

"Apart from the neural tender loving care, we have not had to give any additional treatment," Dr Wild said.

David Whitehead, Warrington's director of social services, said Charlotte needed peace, quiet and stability. "We must consider very carefully any possible psychological effects of the past two days."

Detective Superintendent Kevin Hamilton, who is leading the inquiry, said: "She is obviously a tough little girl and hopefully her experience will be a fading memory as she gets older."

Detective Chief Inspector Helen King, who is also involved in the inquiry and has a three-year-old daughter named Charlotte, added: "Charlotte's plight has touched the hearts of all of us - police officers, members of the public and members of the press."

Mr Hamilton said he expected charges would follow soon. "There is a 24-year-old person in custody. She has yet to be interviewed. It would be quite wrong of me to disclose her identity."



Charlotte Jones being cared for in Warrington hospital after being found in woodland 28 hours after she disappeared

## 'Savvy' children know their ads

Sarah Hall

CHILDREN as young as five are aware of the power of advertising, according to research in developmental psychology revealed yesterday.

By school age, they understand that adverts are designed to promote a positive image and by seven they know the aim of advertising is to sell products.

"Children understand the intent behind advertising by seven or eight. They're far more savvy than we would believe," said the research's author, Brian Young of Essex University, who studied 100 children aged four to nine.

Sweden has already banned all advertising before, during and immediately after children's television, and intends to use its EU presidency in 2001 to push for stricter European laws on advertising.

The findings were welcomed by the Advertising Standards Authority, whose spokesman, Steve Ballinger, said: "The more aware children are of what an advert does, the less likely they are to be misled into buying something."

The research involved children being shown a TV advert for face cream, and being

asked to pick the correct ending from three. The first showed a woman beaming after using the product; the second, her with a blank expression; and the third, with spots on her face.

At age four, half the children chose the third, in the belief adverts existed purely to entertain. By five, 80 per cent chose the first, but by seven 80 per cent did so.

Asked why, the five-year-olds indicated the ending should convey a positive product image, while seven-year-olds understood it was needed to sell it. "They had a sophisticated commercial understanding," Dr Young said.

He added that, while children did not become cynical about adverts until the age of 10, their awareness of advertising techniques ensured they could contend with its influence. "These children are as capable as adults to see through adverts, and there's no evidence to suggest they are swayed by advertising in any different way to them."

He added that the research countered the Swedish argument for increased regulation, saying: "The fact that they can understand the power of advertising means there's a much weaker case for treating them as a special audience."



## Riches give US every reason to be thankful

Report: Julian Borger

**T**HE supermarket aisles are buzzing and the airports are full of bursting with cheerful Americans heading home for the holidays. The United States, which sits down to its Thanksgiving turkey today, has much to be thankful for.

By almost every measure, the US population has literally never had it so good. Not only are average incomes at an all-time high, but in a week which witnessed new stock exchange records, average Americans (nearly half of whom own stocks) have amassed family fortunes far beyond the dreams of their parents.

The newly rampant bull market defies the prophecies of doom which followed the August crash. Despite lingering concerns that US stocks are hugely overpriced, for now the sheer exuberance of the US economy appears invulnerable to the storms raging outside in Asia, Russia and Latin America.

Unemployment at 4.6 per cent and inflation at 0.5 per cent are the lowest since the 1960s. But standards of living are much higher than the Kennedy "Camelot" years and better spread.

Forty years ago, many black Americans lived in the shadow of the Jim Crow segregation laws. In 1998, there is a substantial black middle class, and black standards of living are improving more than any other segment of society. There is little wonder they turned out in force at the November 3 elections to save Bill Clinton.

Americans not only are better off, they know they are better off. In an election constantly taking its own pulse, the bliss index has never known such heights. In a Gallup poll last month, a phe-



Musicians tune up their instruments before the rehearsal for the Macy's Thanksgiving parade in New York yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: LYNSEY ADDARIO

nomenal 85 per cent of those questioned said they were satisfied with their personal well-being, and a majority expected things to get better in the next five years. In the supposedly Elysian Kennedy era, only 38 per cent of Americans reported being similarly content.

The disparity is hardly surprising. Kennedy's America, in the days of the Cuban missile crisis, was living under the shadow of imminent nuclear war. It had just emerged from the Korean war and was sinking into the Vietnam morass which would ultimately cost the lives of 58,000 US servicemen. These days, US casualties in the nation's foreign policing operations are rarely counted on the fingers of more than one hand.

Even Saddam Hussein is a barely visible blip on the anxiety radar. His alleged arsenal of chemical and biological weapons, he is most often depicted in the mass media as a tin-pot buffoon.

Americans are also less

afraid of each other, for good reason. The murder rate is the lowest in 30 years and the number of serious crimes being reported to the police has declined for six successive years.

"We regularly ask people what they think the most important problem facing the nation is," Karlyn Bowman, a pollster for the American Enterprise Institute, said. "This year, there isn't one."

The feelgood factor has inevitably infused Hollywood with its warm glow. The most recent crop of action films seems to be groping for a bad guy sufficiently menacing to send a chill through American spines. The Peacemaker experiments with a Bosnian Serb carrying a nuclear bomb in a spaceship. This month's The Siege falls back on the old reliable Islamic fundamentalists, but bends over backwards to show ordinary Arabs in a good light.

Judging from the films currently playing in US cinemas, this is a prosperous, powerful nation with little to worry

about except the prospect of mortality.

While a growing number of Americans, especially on the West Coast, are seeking to cheat death by having themselves frozen in the hope they can be resurrected in a more technologically advanced millennium, several films have sought to portray the afterlife in the most reassuring manner possible.

In City of Angels, Nicolas Cage returns as a deeply sensitive spirit and falls to slushy love with Meg Ryan. Meanwhile, Robin Williams, flies down from technicolour heaven to rescue his sweetheart from the grips of hell, in What Dreams May Come.

But it is the Thanksgiving blockbuster, Meet Joe Black, which may have come closest to the spirit of the age. In the course of the three-hour film, out this week, Death is enchanted by the sleek, sexy, self-confidence of contemporary America. Looking for a mortal vessel with which to explore the world, it chooses Brad Pitt.

Going by the name of Joe Black, ignoring its usual haunts in the slums and hospitals, Death heads straight for the resplendent mansion of a media mogul, Bill Parish (Anthony Hopkins). And true to the zeitgeist, Parish turns out to be every bit as huggable as Death. He has amassed his huge fortune from honest toil and good judgment, rather than untrammelled greed.

Having come face to face with Death, Parish is hardly intimidated. Far from it, he ends up telling him what to do, almost adopting him as the son he never had. They walk off together into the afterlife, but not before Death has been soothed by peanut butter — and Parish's gorgeous daughter, with whom he has slow-motion sex by the side of the family swimming pool.

In the can-do America of 1998, the message could hardly be clearer. With the right outfit and the right investments, even the Grim Reaper can be seduced.

### Feeling groovy

□ 1998 jobless rate is 4.6 per cent compared with 4.9 last year.

□ Growth on track for 4 per cent for 1998. Inflation remains at its lowest for 35 years.

□ US Stock market back above \$300 after sinking to 7539.07 in August. Dow Jones industrial average up 1392.90 since December 31.

□ Consumer confidence rebounds in November to 126 from 119.3 in October, for first time in four months.

□ Current economic expansion — almost eight years — poised to be the longest in history.

□ Estimated US budget surplus for 1998 is \$70 billion, compared with \$22 billion deficit in 1997. First surplus since 1969.

## Court in NZ dismisses book gag on ex-SAS man

Richard Norton-Taylor and Patrick Smellie in Wellington

**B** RITISH government efforts to silence former special forces and intelligence personnel suffered a new blow yesterday when a New Zealand court dismissed its attempt to prevent a former SAS soldier from speaking about his past exploits.

The New Zealand appeal court allowed a television channel to broadcast an extensive interview with Mike Coburn, a member of the SAS Bravo Two Zero team which operated behind enemy lines during the Gulf war. In a case heard partly in secret, the Government argued that Mr Coburn — an assumed name — had broken a confidentiality contract.

The British Government said last night it still intended to pursue its attempt to stop Mr Coburn from publishing his book, Soldier 5, in New Zealand, despite a spate of books published in Britain over the past few years by former SAS soldiers.

The exploits of Bravo Two Zero — whose mission failed with four men captured and tortured, two killed in combat, one dying of exposure, and one escaping — have been graphically described in a best-seller by Andy McNab.

Mr McNab claimed his book was prompted by references in a previous book by General Sir Peter de la Billière, Britain's Gulf war commander — to a failed operation to sabotage Iraqi Scud missile launchers. Chris Ryan, the one Bravo Two Zero team member who escaped to Syria, subsequently wrote a book about his experiences.

Mr Coburn is identified in the McNab book as "Mark the Kiwi", who was shot twice in the leg in close-quarter fighting before he was captured, chained to a bed and tortured.

In the New Zealand hearings, James Farmer QC, for the British Government, ar-



Books 'bad for SAS morale'

gued that both Mr Coburn and the television channel, TVNZ, breached secrecy contracts for SAS soldiers imposed by the Ministry of Defence in 1996 to try and stop the flow of memoirs.

Willie Akel, a lawyer for TVNZ, argued that a ban would have been pointless in Mr Coburn's case, since the programme contained nothing new. "Bearing in mind the totality of the material is in the public domain already, it was reasonable for TVNZ to think there would not be any difficulties," he said yesterday.

The court refused the Ministry of Defence the right to pursue its case at the Privy Council. Mr Coburn hopes that Read will publish his book in New Zealand. A copy of the manuscript is understood to have been sent to Hodder Headline, the British publisher. Hodder is reported to have sent a copy of the manuscript to the MoD for vetting.

An MoD spokesman said last night it was not prepared to tolerate unauthorised publications by former members of the special forces. "They are bad for morale, generate suspicion, threaten personal security and effect the valuable relationship [the special forces] have with allies and other organisations with which they work."



David Levy: Set to return

## Levy's return will buy PM time

David Sharrock in Jerusalem

**B**INYAMIN Netanyahu's fragile coalition government was hoping to be strengthened last night, with a former minister expected to rejoin the cabinet, 10 months after quitting.

The resignation in January of foreign minister David Levy, a white-haired champion of Israel's working class Moroccan Jews, sent the government into a tailspin. Ever since it has limped from crisis to crisis. But Mr Levy has lost his taste for the political wilderness and was offered a package deal from Mr Netanyahu, including the title of deputy prime minister.

Mr Levy is seen as a dove on the peace process and marks another step in Mr Netanyahu's repositioning the centre-right after the Wye "land-for-security" agreement last month.

Mr Netanyahu failed to get a cabinet majority for the agreement, which was passed only with the support of the Labour opposition. Since then there have been calls for a national unity government or early elections.

When Mr Levy resigned in January he described the government as being "on a tightrope". In return for his renewed support, Mr Levy's Geshet party would also rejoin Mr Netanyahu's Likud. It would mean another four votes in the Knesset for the prime minister, who has a majority of only 61-59.

A deliberately leaked plan to topple the 'Great Leader' may backfire, warns John Gittings in Hong Kong

## US threat to invade North Korea

**T**HE United States has sent a sharp signal to Pyongyang that if its troops attack South Korea, American forces will invade the North and topple the "Great Leader" Kim Jong-il.

This new aggressive strategy, disclosed today in Hong Kong, evokes grim memories of the 1950-53 Korean war in which millions died. It comes only three days after President Clinton visited Seoul and warned North Korea to halt alleged nuclear and ballistic weapons schemes.

Under the new invasion plan, US and South Korean troops would not simply defend the 38th parallel which divides the country, but seek to drive the Northern forces back, capture Pyongyang and set up a new regime.

The US plan has been revealed in the current issue of Far Eastern Economic Review in what is clearly a deliberate leak to put pressure on the North.

The publication says the strategy still has to be ratified by the US and South Korean joint chiefs of staff, but has been carefully drafted over several months.

Its tough posture is in striking contrast to the cautious policy outlined only two days ago in the US department of defence's latest report on East Asia strategy. There have been signs of sharp divisions in Washington on how to deal with North Korea.

South Korean forces, according to the plan, would bear the brunt of the ground assault on the North, while the US provided air and naval power. But one scenario envisages a huge amphibious assault by US marines, who would land on opposite sides of North Korea with the aim of cutting the country in two.

Details of the plan were provided by US officials in Seoul, Washington and Hawaii — headquarters of the US Pacific command — to Richard Halloran, a former New York Times correspondent whose experience of Korea goes back to the 1950s.

The intention behind the leak is presumably to warn off North Korea from any adventure it might launch in its present desperate state of a collapsing economy and starving population.

But publication of the plan, even if the Pentagon distances itself from it, could have the opposite effect, strengthening the position of North Korean military leaders who argue that the US is plotting their downfall.

"It will be welcomed by hardliners both in Pyongyang and Washington," one knowledgeable North Korea watcher commented yesterday. Recent joint US-South Korean military exercises have been denounced by the North as a "prelude to war".

North Korea denied yesterday that it was building an underground nuclear facility in violation of the 1994 agreement requiring it to abandon a suspected nuclear weapons programme.

Mr Clinton warned the North on Saturday to "comply with its obligations", suggesting that the military danger on the Korean peninsula is almost of the same level as in Iraq.

If the new strategy is confirmed, the US would appear to be showing more willingness to intervene against the North Korean dictator than it has so far shown in dealing with Saddam Hussein.

The strategy is said to reflect the belief of military planners that the North Korean army is weaker today and could more easily be defeated. But its publication runs counter to the efforts of South Korea's president, Kim Dae-jung, to defuse tension in North-South relations by pursuing a "sunshine policy" towards Pyongyang.

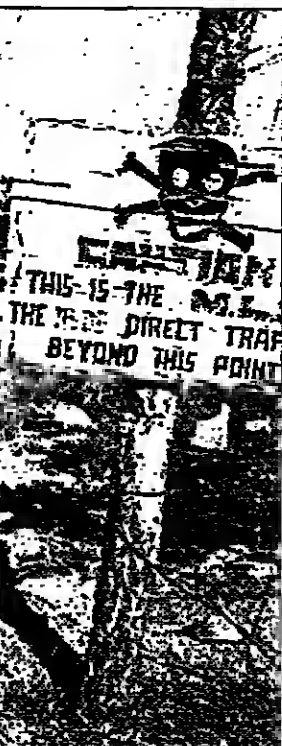
It is also contradicted by the measured view of the US defence department in its East Asian Strategy Report, released on Tuesday. Although it said that Pyongyang was still capable of "inflicting terrible destruction on South Korea", it did not threaten massive retaliation.

Instead, the report said: "The US and South Korea will work together to resolve such situations at the lowest level of tension possible, and in a way that is least disruptive to regional security."

The former US defence secretary, William Perry, has been appointed as co-ordinator of US policy towards North Korea, and is expected to travel to the region soon.



Flashback to Korea, 1950: A grief-stricken American soldier who has just seen his friend killed in action is comforted by a comrade



1953: A road sign warns drivers of enemy fire

## An enemy already defeated

**N**ORTH Korea is a country already on its knees, battered by economic decline and political misrule to the point where millions of its population are starving, writes John Gittings.

Could there be any prospect of it invading the South and incurring massive American punishment? Reports that millions may have died from famine are now greeted less sceptically by foreign observers as more evidence emerges of desperate conditions.

A US congressman, Tooy Hall, visited the North two weeks ago and brought back some of what officials call "substitute food" — powdered dried leaves and straw, made into noodles with no nutritional value.

Around 50 per cent of its young children suffer from malnutrition, according to the UN Children's Fund — the highest rate in East

Asia, and among the world's top 10. The survey was conducted in 130 of North Korea's 212 counties. Conditions in those not surveyed may be worse.

Yet the possibility that Kim Jong-il's ultra-rigid regime may last out in its terminal decline worries regional neighbours. The culture of nana-man-rule, with the Kim cult outstripping those of Mao or Stalin, is difficult to decipher. But there is concern that he relies more heavily than his late father, Kim Il-sung, on the armed forces. He is frequently referred as supreme commander of the people's army.

Evidence that food aid is diverted to the army and the political elite disturbs aid organisations.

Pyongyang has made some diplomatic moves to ease tension — talking part in four-power talks with South Korea, the US and China. It has also appealed

for food aid, and its officials have co-operated with international agencies. But however hard-pressed it may be economically, the North Korean regime still seems intent on acquiring symbolic military power.

In August it caused new alarm by firing a long-range missile — allegedly

development. US intelligence has queried an underground site spotted by spy satellite three months ago. But the US special envoy, Charles Kartman, who visited Pyongyang in an unsuccessful bid to resolve the problem, said last week that "we lack conclusive evidence that the intended purpose" of the site is nuclear-related.

This month has seen a new round of "cattle diplomacy". The veteran founder of the Hyundai Group, Chung Ju-yung, has followed up a second gift of cows to North Korea by holding talks on tourism and joint industrial development projects.

Yesterday Pyongyang insisted that its "underground facility" had no nuclear significance. It repeated its offer to allow a US inspection in return for "compensation" of some \$300 million (£175 million).

Food aid may have been diverted to the army and political elite

to launch a satellite — which overflew Japan. Last week the Washington Post reported claims that the North had built at least two new launch facilities for its medium-range missile.

There are suspicions that North Korea has also restarted its nuclear weapons



## Power behind Milosevic takes revenge

Chris Bird on the latest scalps for the Yugoslav president's wife

**S**HE looks like a homely, slightly chubby presenter for Radio 4. But Mirjana Markovic, wife of Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic, is the driving force behind a political crackdown in Serbia on the press, Belgrade university and Mr Milosevic's most powerful lieutenants.

The latest scalp is that of General Momcilo Perisic, until Tuesday head of the armed forces. He has been demoted to advisor to the federal prime minister — a post he has refused, according to the Belgrade media yesterday.

The fortunes of Gen Perisic, regarded as a moderate force in Serbian politics who has advocated building ties with Nato, follow those of Mr Milosevic's former spy chief Jovica Stancic, who was sacked last month. Until then he had been seen as the most powerful man in Serbia after Mr Milosevic.

The respected VIP newsletter in Belgrade pointed the finger at Mrs Markovic, or "Mira" as she is known to Serbs, for Gen Perisic's removal.

"Perisic's dismissal is just the continuation of the purge which Milosevic has been implementing for several weeks to eliminate associates who aren't loyal, especially those who were opposed to the predominant influence of the Yugoslav Left (JUL party) inside the authorities," VIP said.

Mrs Markovic, a Marxist academic, is the leader of the JUL party. It enjoys influence far out of proportion to the seats it commands in the Serbian parliament.

"Mira is being allowed to wreak vengeance," said a Western diplomat familiar with the Yugoslav first lady's growing influence.

An independent Serb editor, in Belgrade describes the Milosevics thus: "The

More recently, Mr Stancic and Gen Perisic reportedly cautioned against the violent, bloody crackdown in Kosovo which forced nearly 300,000 ethnic Albanians to flee their homes.

Mrs Markovic's vengeance, however, is directed most strongly at Belgrade's dwindling number of independent newspapers and radio stations, and a small group of university professors in the city who have refused to sign new contracts that amount to a declaration of loyalty.

"She is behind the attack on the university and the media crackdown, as it is she who is leading the debate which tries to separate Serbs into patriots or traitors," said a former government minister who fell foul of her.

With Mr Milosevic looking more like the Cheesecake Cat by the day, but never giving any hint of what he thinks — Ms Markovic's pronouncements, mostly in a bi-weekly diary column in the women's magazine Bazar, are seized on by analysts desperate to know what Mr Milosevic will do next.

In a June issue she spelled out the imminent crackdown, accusing the independent media of treason in criticising the government's policy in Kosovo.

Nato's threat of air strikes gave Mr Milosevic his cue to begin the crackdown, conducted through Serbia's deputy prime minister, the extreme nationalist Vojislav Seselj.

The Danas and Dnevni Telegram newspapers and Radio Index station were closed down last month under a new media law that restricts reporting that threatens Yugoslavia's territorial integrity — in effect, any embarrassing news of reverses in Kosovo.

Serbian police have been confiscating copies of Dnevni Telegram printed in Serbia's sister republic of Montenegro, where the leadership has opposed Mr Milosevic's attempts to stifle dissent.

Slobodan Samardzic, a political analyst at Belgrade's Institute of European Studies, and other observers have compared 56-year-old Mrs Markovic to Elena Ceausescu, wife of the late Romanian dictator. She too has academic pretensions, a playboy son and a ruthless determination to keep her husband in power.

But for many years the Belgrade intelligentsia have quietly laughed at Mrs Markovic's columns and growing number of book titles.

"This crackdown comes from two people, Seselj and Mrs Markovic, an unrecognised academic who is frustrated and who has never been taken seriously, and who bears a grudge personally and politically," said Vladeta Jankovic, who was sacked as professor of comparative linguistics at Belgrade University last week for refusing to sign a government contract.

Despite a new law aimed at keeping politics out of the classroom, Mrs Markovic last week established student branches of JUL in universities across the country.



Mirjana Markovic: Compared to Elena Ceausescu, wife of the late Romanian dictator

## German minister outlines plan to transform Europe

Jan Traynor in Bonn

**T**RANSFORMING the European Union into a single state with one army, one constitution, and one foreign policy is the critical challenge of the age, the German foreign minister, Joschka Fischer, said yesterday a few weeks before his government takes over the EU presidency.

As government spin doctors contemptuously brushed off an anti-German broadside from the Sun newspaper yesterday, which dubbed the German finance minister, Oskar Lafontaine, "the most dangerous man in Europe", Mr Fischer went further than his cabinet colleague has ever done in spelling out his maximalist designs for the EU.

"A common [EU] constitution has to be tackled which would produce a European Union as a subject in international law," the foreign minister and Greens leader said in an interview with the liberal Frankfurter Rundschau newspaper. "That is my aim.

It will take a while, but it is the decisive task of the times."

He said the single European currency being launched in January was the "first real transfer of sovereignty" from the nation states of Europe to the union and suggested it would not be the last.

Chancellor Gerhard Schröder also advocates that the single currency be used as a stepping stone to a fuller political union, while Mr Lafontaine, whom the Sun branded the biggest threat to the British way of life since the Nazis, is eager to harmonise corporation tax levels across the EU and co-ordinate fiscal and economic policy-making.

The German government of Social Democrats and Greens is expected to push such policies when it takes the helm of the EU in January.

"If there was a full union, there would also one day be a single foreign and security policy," said Mr Fischer. "The core areas of sovereignty are money, constitution, fundamental rights, law and order, and external secu-

rity. But we Europeans will never be a homogeneous nation state, because the peoples here in Europe are quite different from the federal states of the USA in their idiosyncracies, languages, histories, values and prejudices, loves and hates."

He also said a future European government should be made up of politicians from member states rather than from the European Commission and that the European Parliament should be given a second chamber of MPs from national legislatures.

Speaking in Berlin, where the cabinet met for the first time in the history of the post-war republic, Mr Lafontaine's spokesman quipped that the Sun attack on the finance minister put him in good company with Tony Blair since the tabloid had once labelled Mr Blair dangerous.

Ahead of next year's shift in the seat of government from Bonn to Berlin, Mr Schröder held yesterday's session in the capital to underline his impatience to launch the "Berlin Republic".

# WILL MISS UK BE CROWNED QUEEN?



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Dragoljub Ojdanic replaces Gen Perisic as army chief

situation is like a court: you have a king and queen and if you are close to the family you have influence.

"But Milosevic is tired of all this — he likes to meet the few foreign dignitaries who will see him but he is now a misanthrope. It is she [Markovic] who is now very important in who is appointed."

Mrs Markovic crossed swords with Mr Stancic and Gen Perisic during the huge student protests against Mr Milosevic in 1996. Both publicly ruled out using force to clear the streets, a policy advocated by Mrs Markovic.

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# Comment

## Diary

Simon Bowers

**R**ELATED birthday wishes to Senator Pinochet (83 yesterday) who has unexpectedly agreed to extend his stay in Britain. In charge of birthday celebrations are the Spectator's terrible twins Taki and Paul Johnson. Sadly Mozambique's Alfonso Dhlakama, president of the Renamo party who featured in the Diary last week, will not be among party guests as he leaves Britain this evening. (Renamo in its former incarnation, you recall, was a terrorist army which specialised in slicing off noses and forcing children to watch their parents being raped before press-gang them into its ranks.) Before departing, however, Alfonso has a packed schedule today, including a 10.30 meeting at Millbank Tower with Nick Stiller of the Labour Party's International Office. So long, Alfie. Don't leave it so long next time.

**E**NTITLED simply Mr. Andrew Morton's latest book is not, sadly, the memoirs of a fortunate hagiographer but concerns another lovable African statesman — His Excellency Daniel T. arap Moi. Having acknowledged the support of his London-based wife and two children, "who endured the English winter while I was poolside in Nairobi", Andrew begins by outlining the threat to his integrity posed by writing such a book. "As Moi's biographer I was left with a problem," he explains. "By publishing a detailed rebuttal of every rumour swirling around the president, he would cross the boundary from biography into public relations." Whether Mr Morton's Moi (Michael O'Driscoll £20) strays over this line, we shall be investigating next week. Meanwhile, all the best poolside in the States, Andrew.

**N**OT all protesters in Parliament Square were jubilant yesterday. Hegdeline (the 2,000-strong anti-hedge-abuse pressure group), enraged by the lack of hedge-row provisions in Tuesday's Queen's Speech, were disappointed to find their demonstration overshadowed. Spokesman Michael Jones put on a brave face: "I think around 50 of us turned up," he estimates, "but I couldn't really pick them out of the crowd. That's not bad bearing in mind that we have a very elderly membership scattered throughout the UK." And what does Hegdeline make of the Pinochet ruling? "Our people," says Michael, "have no views other than those relating to hedges."

**W**ITH the latest Lloyd-Webber spectacular not performing as well as it might, the noble Lord agrees to an interview in yesterday's Mirror. He takes the opportunity to clear up speculation as to why he sold his Eaton Square mansion earlier this year. "I thought the place with my second wife Sarah Brightman," Andrew explains, "Sarah, who is quite remarkably psychic, was the first to notice the vibes were not right. And it soon became apparent there was something in the house." ("Andrew," the Mirror's Sue Carron interjects at this point, "is not a man who talks mumbo-jumbo.") On one occasion, he recalls, "all the plugs were removed from the bathrooms. We found them stacked up in the garage." Indeed, Andrew reels off a catalogue of bizarre occurrences including a disappearing script (don't worry, it reappeared) and a disorienting lightbulb. A link to the mysterious case of the decomposing fish fingers found under Rizzle Rosie Boycott's bath has yet to be ruled out.

**M**OST important man in the country on 205, Philip Hall, has lost his rag. The News of the World editor, reports Private Eye, has been bragging to friends about a confrontation with the editor of this paper. "I nearly chinned that ghastly Rushdridge," he is said to have remarked. "But he ran away." Meanwhile the response to our Phil Hall gossip hotline (0171-713-4370) continues to overwhelm.



## The Law Lords leave one man with no place to hide. Who? Jack Straw

### The Pinochet case: London

Hugo Young



**I**N MORE ways than one, the Law Lords' opinions in the Pinochet case are a deep embarrassment to politicians. The immediate embarrassment is Jack Straw. How keenly he must have been anticipating the judges allowing him to glide off the hook. Had they decided that General Pinochet enjoyed immunity as a former head of state, he would have been back in Chile even as you read this, with the Home Secretary troubling only to fashion the shape of the crocodile tears he might or might not feel it expedient to weep for the fact that Spanish justice had been, alas, frustrated. As it is, Mr Straw will be obliged to show us what he's really made of.

But the hilarious reflection which the Law Lords, by three to two, have cast on the conduct of ministers reaches much wider. The effect of their judgment is to ask a punishing question about the moral sensitivity of both Tory and Labour politicians to torture, to hostage-taking, to state-sponsored murder. It is safe to say that no minister since 1990 when Pinochet left office, has even raised the issues the Law Lords addressed yesterday, let alone reached the same conclusion about them.

During the Major years, ex-president Pinochet made many visits to Britain. He was received as an honoured friend, and valued arms-purchaser. From his reception in the Heathrow VIP suite to his encoignement at Claridges and his shopping at Harrods, there was never any interruption to his progress. If a question had been raised inside the Tory government, we may be sure it would have received the same answer: Baroness Thatcher supplied last month, when she said Pinochet's services during the Falklands war rendered

his arrest in London 16 years later "disgraceful". Nothing changed when Labour came to power. The general came and went, unimpeded. In October 1997, the British embassy in Santiago was told he was coming, but the Foreign Office, despite the elapse of several months since Robin Cook's pledge of a new ethical dimension to foreign policy, made no cautionary noises.

The regime of tolerance remained the same, which is how it would presumably have continued but for the vigilance of a Spanish magistrate, who turned out to be more interested than any British cabinet minister in bringing a systemic former torturer to justice.

The politicians, in other words, shared a professional indifference to the crimes of Augusto Pinochet. Part of this was doubtless due to a pragmatic analysis which said that Chile had struck a healing concordat within itself, which outsiders had a duty to respect. And besides, there was the matter of trade, in arms and other things. But also present was a kind of professional ennui among ministers, an inability to reawaken the instincts of their youth, a deadening of moral rigour about a man who had, after all, been roaming free — though not to France, or Spain, or a fair number of other countries that excluded him — for most of a decade.

This dullness of basic instinct is what the highest court now challenges. With salutary clarity, the judges have shown up the politicians. They did not need to do so. Lord Bingham, the lower court, had shown them how to avoid it by declaring that, whatever Pinochet might have done, the immunity of heads of state extended

to former heads of state as regards their public acts while in office. The most contorted and technical opinions yesterday, from Lords Slynn and Lloyd, denied that there was any degree of international criminality — even, it was said at the hearing, Hitler's genocide — that could overturn the doctrine of immunity.

**B**UT this was eloquently swept aside by Lord Nicholls and, most notably, Lord Steyn. In place of Bingham's doctrine of passivity, which said the line could never be drawn against immunity prevailing, Steyn destroyed the notion that the legitimate functions of a head of state, immune from judicial reach, could include genocide, torture, hostage-taking and crimes against humanity.

These were condemned under international law, and signatories to conventions against them undertook to act against perpetrators coming within their jurisdiction. Pinochet had allegedly presided over a system that "tortured victims on a vast scale" and his extradition on the grounds of ordering and procuring this did not attract immunity of any kind.

Here was a singularly unflinching statement from the judicial majority. Though couched in legalities, it was bold and principled, taking a stand on behalf of the globalisation of fundamental human rights which will be seen as a milestone.

If and when Pinochet stands before a Spanish court, he will make his own defence on the substance of the charges, but he will not, a reiterated claim in this new jurisdiction to sovereign immunity. But the Law Lords place the weight of the highest domestic court against the

proposition that Britain is a safe haven for old dictators whose own country has found reason to excuse for crimes against humanity. It is a moment to make one feel prouder of the judges who concluded it than the politicians whose easy negligence caused it to happen in the first place.

Carried logically down the path, the doctrine thus enshrined may be inconvenient. It has already provoked charges of inconsistency and double-standards — if Pinochet, why not de Klerk? Nobody is contesting the immunity of serving leaders, which makes Castro and Arafat and Jiang Zemin safe enough.

But if old torturers aren't free to walk safe abroad, once their day is done, what inducement will they have to step down from office, and make the kind of democratic compromise that Pinochet himself was prevailed upon to countenance in 1990?

The answer is simple. That kind of compact is made within the borders of the state. Nobody asked Pinochet to travel outside them. What the British judges have said is that the amnesty Chile granted must not be allowed to poison and override the sanctity of international law in respect of the highest crimes.

They declare for the supremacy of international human rights and, though disclaiming all political considerations, are challenging the Home Secretary to do the same. Spain suggests that if a *prima facie* state torturer ventures outside his own jurisdiction, he makes himself available for justice. The Law Lords agree.

It will be a singular day of doom if Mr Straw contrives a way of saying that Pinochet, nevertheless, remains above the law.

A noted Chilean author applauds the judgment on the general

## No safe havens

### The Pinochet case: Santiago

Ariel Dorfman

**A**S I strolled with my wife through the centre of Santiago, I heard loud drums beating, saw far-away red banners waving in the warm spring breeze.

I guessed it was some sort of march to demand General Pinochet's extradition from England to Spain. Not so: a motley crew of about 100 students, dressed like mediaeval buffoons, their faces painted all sorts of colours, several of them on gigantic stilts, were parading through one of Santiago's main streets inviting the public to a Festival of University Theatre, a sort of Edinburgh Fringe here in our nation's capital. I loved how they jumped, they juggled, they played the fool, dancing their joy at being alive, taking over the rather staid Chilean public space with their carnivalesque celebration of art.

When they had passed, however, not 20 yards behind them another sort of group appeared, marching slowly and solemnly over that very same cement the mothers and daughters and wives of the disappeared, the association of relatives of prisoners who had been executed without a trial, the movement against torture.

These were the women whom I had witnessed for the past 20 or so years, day after day, keeping the flame of memory burning, unwilling to forget their murdered, damaged loved ones, and what had been done to those loved ones in some slippery, unspeakable cellar in this same city. They have waited for the day when the man who has mocked them, insulted them, arrested them, beaten them, refused to apologise for what he did, would have to answer for his deeds. They have waited for this day when they would be free to accuse him and he would not be free to ignore their existence. They were singing quietly down the street, hands locked, photos of their dead pinned to their dresses.

Chile is a country where something as normal and

wondrous as the young delirium in their own energy and merriment is incessantly being challenged by a traumatic past that refuses to be buried. A country where we cannot get on with life until the life that was destroyed right here has been acknowledged.

A middle-aged woman pushed by me as I watched the Mothers of the Disappeared march grimly by, and muttered under her breath, but loud enough for many to hear: "Communist garbage! Liars! Mentiroso! We should have killed the lot of them!" Here was a supporter of General Pinochet, someone who no doubt saw him as a saviour of the fatherland, fuming at the idea that the man who had created the foundation for a free-market Chile should be in jail. She is part of a vocal, indeed vociferous, rightwing minority, who have taken to the streets in feverish numbers.

Listening to her spit out those words, the rigid fury in her body, her recalcitrant inability to understand what three victims of the dictatorship had been through, I was taken back to the worst moments of the fascist protests against the democratic government of Salvador Allende in the early seventies.

I felt a knot of fear coil inside my stomach. I had seen what that anger could do, where it could lead. I was remembering the long years of Pinochet's rule where people like this belligerent woman had all the power and believed they could do whatever they wanted and never be held accountable.

My own opinion is that the general's detention and the possibility that he could be judged in a faraway country for the desolation and death he spread in my own land, is crucial to the moral wellbeing of Chile. It reminds us, slaps us into understanding, the deepest truth about our recent history, the truth we have been hiding from: we have been, we still are, hostages of General Pinochet.

The House of Lords ruling unequivocally notifies all dictators that there are no safe havens.

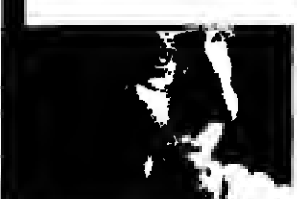
Ariel Dorfman's latest book is *Healing South, Looking North*, a memoir about surviving Pinochet.



Apologists for selective education are fighting hard and sticking meticulously to the same line, but they deserve to fail

## Grammar power

Roy Hattersley



and Employment, identified when he complained of "coasting at a level just high enough to keep them out of trouble".

The grammar schools have, however, enjoyed a public relations triumph. They have convinced some commentators that the 166 which remain are about to be abolished by a government which panders to what one columnist calls "class hatred, guilt and spite".

They are right to say that the "parent polls" are, in one particular, hugely biased. But they are biased against, not in favour of, the comprehensive principle. In about half the areas in which selection remains, only parents with children in "feeder schools" — primaries, both private and state, which have sent five pupils to grammar schools during the previous three years — will be allowed to

vote. So the electorate will be made up of the people most likely to support the status quo. The apologists for grammar schools must know it. So why do they pretend the opposite? We can only assume, in the language of the football terraces, that they decided to get their retaliation in first.

Nobody who has thought seriously about secondary education doubts that the existence of grammar schools influences the whole education system in the areas where they survive. Most Conservatives believe that they have a beneficial effect. Academic opinion — and almost all the Labour Party outside the Cabinet — insists that they damage the schools around them.

Either way, their future is a legitimate concern to parents throughout their catchment areas. Clearly they should all be given

votes. Yet the most extreme commentators have complained about the principle of consulting parents. "The ballots on grammar schools are intended to destroy them," one wrote. Whether she knew it or not, she was paraphrasing the Duke of Wellington who thought that extending the franchise

### Their discipline comes from years of enforcing school uniform

chise beyond landowners was intended to destroy our matchless constitution.

To the grammar school lobby, parental choice is desirable only when they can choose to support their prejudices and, in the case of the

headteachers who have joined the propaganda war, their vested interests. Last week, the heads did themselves little credit. Roger Hale at Calston Grammar School wrote about "the dustbin of history". Anthony Stanton of Simon Langton Girls' in Canterbury claimed that selection was an idea "whose time has come, again". Would you want your children to be educated by people who write tired clichés?

The most absurd defence of selection is the pretence that it helps talented working-class boys and girls escape from the inner cities — "a leg-up out of deprivation" as one columnist inelegantly called it. The leg-up argument is simply not true. Selective schools remain in general beyond the reach of the lowest income groups.

When Birmingham holds its parental ballot, I doubt

if any parents from my old inner-city constituency will get a vote. Sparkbrook primary schools rarely send children to King Edward's. But their pupils suffer from the grammar schools' existence. John Stuart Mill taught us that where the behaviour of one group of citizens prejudices the interests of the rest, society is entitled to expect them to change their ways.

There is nothing new in the revelation that selection is biased against the poor. Jean Floud, principal of Newnham College, Oxford, said simply and incontrovertibly 25 years ago: "Social as well as academic selection is at work in schools." But there is another, and perhaps more important, reason for abolition. A policy built on providing escape routes for 20 per cent of pupils leaves 80 per cent imprisoned. It is an admission that there is

something to escape from and that most children must remain imprisoned. As long as a few break through the bars, they are prepared for the rest to be locked in disadvantage.

All that being said, the grammar school lobby has had a remarkably good week. Operating with the discipline which comes from years of enforcing school uniform, they have meticulously stuck to the same line. The government, they all say, is cheating. I guess they want to make parents panic. Or perhaps they are making excuses for defeat. They may even be preparing to claim — when some grammar schools survive — that selection is so popular that even the dirty tricks of a Labour government cannot defeat it. Truth and reason can. We will not hear much of either from the grammar school lobby.



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## The limits of immunity

The law strikes back

AS IF in a penalty shoot-out, the Law Lords yesterday teetered dramatically on the edge of saving Chile's former dictator, Augusto Pinochet, before deciding that after all he must answer for his crimes. It was a historic judgment by any standard. In human terms, it gives the victims of the murderous coup which brought the General to power a sense of retribution as well as a fleeting glimpse of the justice which has eluded them for so long. Politically, it may start a process which could help them find out how their loved ones died. Judicially, it marks a decisive moment, a victory of the modern over the ancient, and the arrival in action and no longer just in theory of the new concepts of international law which have developed over the last two decades.

The High Court's judgment last month was clothed in the old-fashioned dress of sovereign immunity, insisting that a nation-state's chief executive stands above elementary morality as well as international bans on torture and genocide. The Law Lords' majority decision throws that out. It accepts that actions by heads of state which do not fall under the heading of their normal official duties are subject to criminal law. Torture is not part of a head of state's duties any more than, in Lord Steyn's quaint phrase, "murdering his gardener". This is a vital distinction which means that those countries like Britain which have signed the various conventions on human rights now have to act on them. It also sounds a

warning to all future dictators as well as retired leaders, such as South Africa's P W Botha or Indonesia's Suharto, that they will not be able to travel abroad freely. The deterrent effect of such sanctions may not be great but they are a major step towards the globalisation of higher standards of executive behaviour.

Politically, yesterday's judgment may have a beneficial effect even in Chile. Every authoritarian system ends differently. The transition which led to the demise of racial supremacy in South Africa produced a Truth and Reconciliation Commission as well as a chance to prosecute some of the torturers, though not yet the leaders. In Argentina the military regime was so weakened politically by the time it left office that at least one ex-president went to prison. Chile's compromise was softer, allowing General Pinochet and other army leaders to escape scot-free. He has never shown remorse and, as the statement he issued from his hospital bed two weeks ago made clear, he still peddles the nonsense that his coup saved Chile from a Soviet-inspired tyranny. He does not even argue that the end justified the means. He simply ignores the torture and murders which followed the coup, not just in its first hours, but for months and years thereafter.

It is perhaps too much to hope that the Law Lords will make him reflect a little deeper. But it may help the other apologists for the Pinochet dictatorship to think harder. The Chilean government, too, should consider whether it wants to continue to defend a man who is wanted for trial in several countries. It would do better to seize yesterday's judgment as a chance to strengthen civilian rule and push the army further back to barracks as Argentina and Brazil have done.

The decision places the ball firmly back in

the lap of the Home Secretary, Jack Straw. He must decide whether the extradition should proceed, or whether there are grounds, compassionate or otherwise, to object to it. He should ignore the advice of the apologists for Pinochet, Lady Thatcher and William Hague amongst them. The Government has consistently said it would let the law take its course. The law has taken its course. The Government should not change its mind now.

## Peace junkies

Ulster gets its fix

ONE of the weaknesses of the Northern Ireland peace process has been its constant need for a fix of drama. Like an addict requiring a jolt to get up in the morning, the process has often seemed chemically dependent on the rush of adrenalin — whether provided by a bombing in Omagh or a visit from an American president. Without a sense of event, the humdrum, day-to-day work of peace-making often appears to be too much for Northern Ireland. Energies flag, goodwill breaks down — until a senior player warns that the whole thing is about to collapse. The shock of such a statement then induces enough panic to jolt the enterprise back into life.

That has been the pattern in Northern Ireland these last few days, beginning with a gloomy message from Seamus Mallon, the much-admired deputy leader of the SDLP and designated deputy first minister in the Northern Ireland Assembly. He warned that the Good Friday Agreement could sink if key decisions were not taken within the next 10 days. He cited the thorny negotiations over the scope of the north-south bodies that will link Ulster and the Repub-

lic, and the equally fraught talks about the structure of the province's new executive.

The shot of drama came with a visit yesterday from the Prime Minister, whose dedication to Northern Ireland has been one of the most admirable aspects of his premiership. Under his guidance, nationalists and Unionists were able to agree on at least six areas of north-south co-operation — the minimum required under the Good Friday accord. Differences remain, however, over the new executive, with Unionists wanting fewer ministerial departments, perhaps in order to keep the number of Sinn Féin office-holders down to one, rather than two. This should not be an unbridgeable gap. It's a dispute over detail, not principle — a point Tony Blair will underline in Dublin today by becoming the first British politician to address a joint session of the Dail and Senate since Ireland achieved independence in 1922. His presence there will confirm the historic change that this year has witnessed, the recognition by Ireland's different communities that they are destined to live together and share a common island. Obstacles remain, not least the Unionist desire to see the IRA hand over weapons and the IRA's equally adamant refusal to do so. But the big step has already been taken: the people of Northern Ireland have chosen the road to peace — even if they need the occasional drama-fix to keep them on it.

## Business bullies

Reject Rolls-Royce's bluff

TONY BENN's diaries recall how, as Industry Secretary, he told the then chairman of Rolls-Royce, Sir Kenneth Keith, where to get off when the industrialist tried some bully-boy tactics back in the 1970s.

Little has changed over the years. The current boss of Rolls-Royce, Sir Ralph Robins, has warned that the aero engine company will consider moving lock, stock and smoking barrel to the US should the Government adopt "costly" European social legislation. Ministers would be well advised to take a leaf out of Mr Benn's book and give the company the same dusty answer it received a quarter of a century ago.

Sir Ralph's argument is that it costs 30 per cent more to manufacture goods in Europe than it does in the United States. That may well be true in nominal terms, but as every economist knows, what matters is the cost per unit of output. Here, the higher productivity and superior capital utilisation of European companies — particularly in high-tech sectors such as aerospace — pays off.

As a result, Europe's manufacturing sector is not loss-making at all, but highly efficient and profitable, as a quick glance at the trade figures clearly shows. While the US is running a whopping trade deficit, France — the epitome of the high-cost European model — boasts a massive surplus.

If the economics of moving to the US are poor, then the politics are equally lousy. Europe represents a huge market for any aero-engine company, and by wrapping itself in the Stars and Stripes Rolls-Royce might lose orders. Even for shareholders, it's hard to see the point.

Actually, of course, there isn't a point, because Sir Ralph is bluffing. The Government should not be swayed by industry's special pleading — whether it comes from the pro- or anti-European camp — but might care to remind the directors of Rolls-Royce that they would be in no position to draw their hefty salaries had the state not bailed out the company back in the early 1970s.

## Letters to the Editor

### Lords and the Royal Court

POLLY Toynbee paints a nightmare scenario of Tory hereditary peers snubbing by delay much of the legislation in the Queen's Speech as their last fling before being deprived of voting rights (Comment, November 23). There is an easy remedy: the Government should announce its intention to create at least 100 Labour hereditary peers whose task would be to defeat all Tory sabotage tactics and vote for the removal of hereditary peers' voting rights, including their own. Ernest Wistrich, London.

THERE is one ploy Tony Blair could use to deal with his present difficulties with democracy. Make Rhodri Morgan, Dennis Canavan and Ken Livingstone hereditary peers — and then abolish them. I Morgan, Lincoln.

CAN Christmas be far away with 750 lords a-leaping? Tony Tucker, Kingsley, Cheshire.

WHY should the Jewood Foundation get its name attached to the Royal Court for a measly £3 million (Report, November 25)? Why not name it the Arts Council Royal Court for the millions that are poured into the organisation? Or the National Lottery Royal Court after the £16 million grant received under Stephen Daldry's artistic leadership? If the Royal Court is going bust, it's because it was greedy and over-expanded without a feasible business plan. Arts organisations all except after Lottery money and now that it's blowing up in their faces they won't take responsibility. It's time to sue up, kiddies. Annika Blumh, London.

BRIEF back on the menu (November 24)? How many, like myself, who had only toyed with the idea of a meat-free diet are going to return to carnivorous ways on the say so of a handful of agriculture ministers? No thank you. Natasha Moorfield, Bury, Lancs.

Please include a full postal address, even on e-mailed letters, and a daytime telephone number. We may edit letters.

## Patients with doctors

YOUR leader (November 23) focuses on a key cultural and political problem of public policy in the "secret garden" of clinical practice. How can patients be reassured that they are going to be seen by a doctor who knows what they are doing, and who is up-to-date with best practice?

Patients are some way short of being able to make informed judgments in advance of accepting treatment. Doctors know where they would send their child or spouse, but patients cannot discover which doctor is fully competent and which isn't. To restore confidence in doctors, individual performance needs to be assessed, and published by named doctor. The public are entitled to be sure they see the best. Those doctors who are not up to the mark need to be identified and improved before they do damage.

Two further changes would help. The stronger monitoring presently proposed looks likely to be too closely controlled by the professions. An independent royal inspectorate under lay chairmanship with professional advisers, is essential. So too, is much stronger local NHS management. There have been some courageous efforts to tackle the

problems well known to professionals and inadequately addressed by self-regulation. These efforts have not received sufficient support from government. It is critical that chief executives of NHS Trusts be given consistent support at the highest level to manage clinical performance and quality. This management should be done in public, not behind closed doors with patients being asked to have faith until the next disaster is revealed. Prof John Spiers, Chairman, The Patients' Association, 1996-1997.

THERE is an urgent need to overhaul the current system whereby GPs choose their patients, not patients their GPs (Letters, November 25). No one has the right to register with the GP of their choice, even if they live in the catchment area of a GP with an open list. Patients can be turned away for any reason or none. Those who do manage to register with their chosen GP may be struck off with no explanation and no right of appeal. When in opposition, the Labour Party pledged to 'restrict the right of GPs to remove patients. When can we expect some action? Muriel A.H. Edinburgh.

MUCH space has rightly been given to calls for greater openness about doctors' performance and quicker action when things go wrong. While the National Consumer Council endorses both aims, we feel the remedies need to reach further than those proposed. Many cases of poor practice will not be the fault of a single doctor but will be caused by a complex combination of factors, such as the use of locums, communication and supervision problems, excessive workload, training deficiencies and poor equipment. Where an individual is the problem, continuing professional development courses and clinical audits will help, provided they are properly carried out.

The quality of both could be much improved by input from those representing the consumer interest. Involving consumers in training, standard setting and even carrying out clinical audits would ensure that services are more relevant and accessible to those who use them. There are no quick fixes: the problem of poor outcomes needs to be treated in the round, with patients contributing to the cure. Ruth Evans, Director, National Consumer Council.



## Let's give thanks for Christmas

Of course kids should have Christmas presents (Parents, G2, November 25). But the pressure on both parents and kids to keep up with toy fads that change every five minutes is enormous. No Shop Day this Saturday isn't about depriving kids, but about questioning whether the glitzy promises of advertising bear up in reality. Do kids really benefit from being seduced into the throw-away society practically before they're walking? How do the kids do in the playground, just because their parent can't afford to keep up with this consumerism?

Surely this deserves a sensible debate. We should discuss not only the social impacts that advertising has on kids and their parents, but also the environmental effects of our throwaway culture. Do we want our children to grow up in a world of waste dumps and toxic waste? We want all children, regardless of their parents' income, to enjoy Christmas now and in the future. That means protecting them from exploitative TV advertising, and the cynical use of "pester power".

to push products that nobody needs and many cannot afford. Dr Anna Thomas, Friends of the Earth.

AMEN to your leader (November 24). Someone has finally noticed that Christmas in the US is not an orgy of television-watching, nor, for that matter, of boozing. Both such over-indulgences would be considered irrelevant even in non-religious households. Gayle Goshorn, London.

I'm afraid I have to shatter the illusion that Americans turn away from the tube on national holidays. After two years here, it has become apparent that virtually every male in America descends from the dinner table to watch the football game for the rest of Thanksgiving/Christmas day. Most women escape to the movies, or even the mall. Although you desire to see the British spend more time talking to each other is admirable, the US is not where we should be looking for Frue Neath, Philadelphia, US.

## Oxford dons have done poetry a disservice

THANK you for highlighting my employer Oxford University Press's outrageous decision to axe its entire poetry list on grounds of insufficient profitability (Neither rhyme nor reason, November 24). It may interest your readers to know that last year the Press, then in surplus, gave the university a one-off donation of £20 million.

A fraction of this sum could have secured the future of the poetry list, yet in a grotesque display of institutional philistinism, the university dons who sit as delegates voted with management to end the Press's 90-year commitment to contemporary poetry.

However much management may bleat about commercial imperatives, OUP is an autonomous department of the university, an arrangement that should entail a responsibility to academic ideals — indeed the top brass frequently explain cuts in fringe

benefits to staff on the grounds of conserving resources for the core activity of furthering scholarship and literature. As 40 poets begin hunting for a new publisher, and eight OUP employees face redundancy, the stench of hypocrisy hangs heavy over Oxford. Name and address supplied.

OUP's beheading of poets such as Basil Bunting joins them to a list of ex-Bunting publishers which includes The Corgis Press, Fulcrum Press and Knapar and Houghton — names now known largely to historians. It's a reminder that the main service fleet of poetry will remain enthusiastic small presses. The real losers are OUP themselves, their hard-won reputation for long-term commitment to their authors looking decidedly seaskiff. Richard Caddell, Basil Bunting Poetry Centre, Durham University Library.

## Poor quality

SUSTAINABLE development is about integrating quality of life and environmental protection (Quality of Life gets a higher profile, November 24). To measure it we need to understand that "eco-efficiency of welfare" — things like how much energy people need to consume to keep warm in their homes, how far a family has to drive each week to get to shops, workplaces and recreation, or how much soil degradation, energy, traffic and packaging it takes to supply their food.

The trouble with indicators like these is that they point to policies like energy conservation, public transport and localised, low input, labour-intensive food growing and retailing, where old-fashioned heavy public intervention will be needed where efficiency should mean employing more people not fewer, and where

deregulation and international competitiveness is more problem than solution.

So the challenge to integrate is ducked. The environmental indicators are simply parked next to conventional economic ones — economic growth, investment in public assets and people in work. These headline indicators are such meaningless suggestions that (for example) they could show positive trends if we carry on spending more private money driving in congested traffic, more public money building roads to accommodate it and hospitals to treat the injuries and respiratory and sedentary illnesses it causes. They won't make us any wiser about whether life in Britain is getting better or worse.

Only two of the thirteen indicators — expected years of healthy life, and houses unfit to live in — directly tell us about quality of life. Roger Levett, London.

## In celebration

CELEBRATED yesterday the 150th anniversary of the birth of the man who, whether he was released or not, What counts for me is the celebration and memory of the lives of the innocent victims of this dictatorial regime, and the younger members of my family, in Chile, in Argentina and the UK, can better understand now what the supporters of Pinochet stand for, and hopefully will reject that set of values while helping to build a better society for all.

How can one support the immunity of the rapists of a 14-year-old secondary student, for example, who was imprisoned in Chile, the first scene I remember from my arrival at the detention camp (Concepcion football stadium, October 3, 1973)? Why should I forget? Dr Marta Zabaleta, London.

## Devil's work

YOUR scurrilous article (Ruined church snatched from Satanists, November 24) seeks to link Paganism with Satanism and accuses us of involvement in the desecration of churches. That is an outrageous lie. Paganism is a religion rooted in reverence for nature, the acknowledgement of deity as both goddess and god, and an ethical way of life. Pagans do not believe in, let alone worship, the Christian devil. There are over a hundred thousand Pagans in Britain today. Far from attacking Christians we are engaged in constructive dialogue with them and with the other religious communities of our multi-faith society through the Inter Faith Network. To claim that "anybody standing in the pentagon is under the control of the devil" may not surprise critics of US foreign policy but is nonsensical in this context. The desecration of any place of worship is a crime against spirituality and the great majority of Pagans, like decent folk of every faith, will unhesitatingly condemn it. John MacIntyre, Interfaith co-ordinator, The Pagan Federation.

## Family friend

MARTIN Evans suggests that the Government's sole focus in making work pay is through means-tested benefits (Society, November 25). Can I inject a little balance? The Working Families Tax Credit will guarantee every working family an income of at least £190 per week whilst ensuring they keep more of each pound they earn. Second, Martin Evans commends Child Benefit as a work incentive but fails to mention the record increase we have announced — to £14.40 for the first child.

Third, he ignores our agenda to reform tax and National Insurance to improve the rewards from work. Then there is the minimum wage, the new Disabled Persons Tax Credit and pilots to allow people on incapacity benefit to try work. Not to mention the New Deals and our agenda for improving skills in the labour force and promoting family friendly employment. The Government is providing incentives to work while, doing more to help people who need help most. Alistair Darling, Secretary of State for Social Security.

## On acne, depression and mood-altering drugs

HAVE the lawyers who are planning to sue Roche Products over Roaccutane, the wonder acne drug (Acne drug makes face lawsuit over pill's suicide link, November 19), given any thought to the severely depressing, indeed debilitating effects of acne itself? Roaccutane in fact comes with a warning that, like many drugs, it can affect mental state and lead to mood swings.

For many, these mood changes are worth tolerating in exchange for the chance to live life to the full again. It's about time that lawyers, and the general public, recognise what dermatologists and drug companies have long since known: there is nothing superficial or cosmetic about skin disorders. Leave acne sufferers to make up their own mind about this remarkable drug that some would not be here without. Dr Jay Prosser, University of Leicester.

ITOOK Roaccutane for six months last year. Having chronic acne meant I also suffered from depression, affecting my self-esteem and social life. Being on the drug was admittedly not very nice but, one year on, I am a changed person. The thought of this drug being banned because of the bad publicity from a minor number of adverse reactions is simply terrifying. Naomi Paten, London.

YOUR championship of the drug Clozapine is, I think, blatant advertising on behalf of the drug company involved (Leader, November 23). It is an old drug which was withdrawn because it had led to the deaths of so many patients. It was reintroduced several years ago, together with the compulsory monitoring of every patient on the drug to see that the level of their white blood cells did not fall to dangerously low levels.

Despite this monitoring, the drug has continued to cause the death of patients. We do not know their number. The drug has other highly undesirable side effects. For example it can cause severe epilepsy. The abrupt withdrawal of the drug, if the white blood cells fall, can produce a highly serious psychotic state. It must be asked, are the benefits of the drug worth the risks involved? No one knows how Clozapine or indeed any other anti-psychotic drug, exert their beneficial effects. Gwyneth Hemmings, Schizophrenia Association of Great Britain.

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**K**ENNETH Oxford, who has died aged 74, was one of the most outspoken and influential chief constables of the post-war years. While he was highly respected by the police as a traditional policeman, he was to clash with his local police committee over what they saw as his autocratic behaviour, and to become the first chief constable in Britain to resign from his post after a series of public criticisms during the

He blamed parents for the riots: 'If they are not going to pick up their responsibilities and apply discipline it means I have got to do it'

He was outspoken in his attacks on the legal profession, television violence and the press. In 1990, following the controversial death of James Kelly in police custody in Huyton, he attacked his critics: "predictable vociferous groups bent on the disestablishment of democratic policing, supported by so-called investigative journalism."

Texteth riots when he authorised his officers to fire CS gas canisters to disperse the crowds. The riots left one young unemployed man dead and many, including police officers, injured. Oxford blamed the parents of the rioters for the "uncivilised rampage", saying "if these parents are not going to pick up their responsibilities and apply discipline it means I have got to do it."

Calls for his resignation from members of the black community followed as they blamed him for insensitive policing, but he garnered much support from the Young Men's League, a group of 100 black men with a petition signed by 6,000 people in support of his handling of the riots.

He was to clash frequently with the then chairman of the police committee (later the police authority) Margaret Thatcher, who was incapable at Oxford of stating her case. Mrs (now Lady) Simon later said that his attitude to the authority was that they should "pay up and shut up." She added that it was "never ever challenged" if he was ever challenged. "I was never challenged," she said. "I went into a garden where a dog was loose - barking, shouting, denigrating. I put it down to the fact that being challenged by a woman was quite outside his experience."

One former senior colleague of Oxford's agreed with her, saying that Oxford found powerful women difficult to accept "with the exception of the Queen and Mrs



**Under attack . . . Kenneth Oxford is helped into a car after a meeting with community leaders during the Toxteth riots of 1981**

Thatcher," under whose premiership he was knighted in 1988. He had received the Queen's Police Medal in 1977 and the CBE in 1981.

The police committee urged him to resign in 1985 following a further clash over his style of policing. The then Home Secretary, Leon Brittan, declined the pressure and backed Oxford.

But police colleagues spoke warmly of his leadership qualities, of the loyalty he in-

spired in his officers and his desire to uphold the law. "He was a professional of the old school," said one former colleague. "A very strong character, very respected by his officers. He was also one of the key players in anti-terrorism [as a member of the Association of Chief Police Officers anti-terrorism committee between 1982 and 1989]."

ble in Alison Halford, but their relationship deteriorated and Ms Halford was later to bring an action against her force for sexual discrimination in passing her over for promotion.

At the hearing of her case in 1982, Ms Halford talked of the "tyranny" of Oxford's leadership and said how she had been humiliated when he ruled that she was not to be given command of the force while he was away ill. She

claims she had been "rubbed and marginalised" by Oxford, who had "never, ever rubbed shoulders with someone such as myself who could stand shoulder to shoulder with him and say, 'I am as good as you, chum, because I have done the same things'".

After leaving the police in 1989, Oxford became Deputy Lieutenant of Merseyside. He worked for two years as a regional director with Lloyds Bank before retiring to con-

template his roses and spend more time on his other interests of cricket — he followed the fortunes of both Surrey and his adopted home of Lancashire — and music.

He is survived by his wife, Muriel, whom he married in 1954. They had no children.

**Duncan Campbell**  
Sir Kenneth Oxford, policeman,  
born June 25, 1924; died Novem-  
ber 23, 1998

**WHITBURN:** The tide was falling as we left the promenade and walked on to the sands, where white-topped breakers rolled in off the North Sea. Buffeting wind made it difficult to hold binoculars still, but towards the rocks at the northern end of the beach I could make out a small, dark object that seemed to be drifting in and out with the tide. Even at this distance we could see that the "something" was a flock of sanderlings — the most hyperactive wading birds on the seashore — constantly dashing forward to grab crustaceans disturbed by the retreating

waves then scurrying back before the next breaker arrived. As we moved closer we could see a large flock—120 before I lost count—surging forward, turning, then retreating in perfect synchrony in rhythm to the breaking waves, their black tips a blur of movement. This was the first appreciable amount of shorebird life I had seen since we had ignored us as we passed within 10 yards. Only a chasing dog disturbed them, sending the flock in an arc between the wave crests, before they settled back further along the shore. A binocular sweep across the rocks at the

end of the sands revealed scores of waders, waiting for the tide to fall. Chestnut-backed turnstones picked their way through piles of seaweed, alongside redshanks and ringed plovers. A bar-tailed godwit probed the edge of a pool with its upturned beak. Soon they were lost in shadow, and we retraced our steps towards the promenade past the boarded-up funfair and the bright lights of the amusement arcades. The sodium street lamps were coming on, matching golden flecks of cloud in a winter twilight sky.

**PHIL GATES**

Prof Margaret Boden, philosopher and psychologist, 82; Robert Goulet, singer and actor, 65; Lord Gowers, former chairman, Arts Council of England, 58; John Gummer MP, former Conservative minister, 59; John Hendry, co-director, Design Museum, 43; Ann Keen, actress, 60; John McKie, Labour MP, 50; John McVie, musician, 60; Joe Quinn MP, minister, 46; Europe, 54; Charles Schmitz, cartoonist, creator of Peanuts, 76; Gisela Stuart, Labour MP, 43; Barbara Switzer, trade union leader, 58; Tina Turner, singer, 59; Keith Vaz, Labour MP, 47.

## The free-wheeling keyboard

**T**HE pianist Kenny Kirkland, who died aged 43 of a suspected drug overdose, was most famously associated with trumpeter Wynton Marsalis, with whom he worked in the first part of the 1980s, but he straddled the jazz and rock worlds, and was a consummate eclecticist.

The Marsalis period was a light years removed from Kirkland's early career as a teacher of classical music, following his studies at the Manhattan School of Music — he was born in New York. His blossoming friendship with Herbie Hancock was also coupled with an ear increasingly cocked towards rhythm and blues, led him into the more free-wheeling areas of keyboard playing, particularly on synthesizer and electric piano, and he joined Polka Tuscany violinist Michael Breckler to form a 1977 European tour.

**S**UNITS with ex-Weather

Report bassman Miroslav Vlnas and drummer Edwin Jones followed in quick succession before Kirkland was invited to join the band of the virtuoso Japanese trumpeter Terumasa Hino. It was while on tour with Hino that Kirkland first came to the attention of Marsalis. "I didn't need no request invitation to join forces with the trumpet world's rising star. If Marsalis's playing was unsurpassed — it was suggested by some he was already on a par with Miles Davis — then Kirkland was not — he found, providing Marsalis with the commitment that was well beyond the norm for a sideman. So much so that, together with Marsalis's brother, the saxophone playing Branford, Kirkland's association with Marsalis brought him to a far wider audience than had previously been the case. It is the attention of rock music's highest names.

Thus, to the surprise and ill-concealed annoyance of Marsalis, both Kirkland and brother Branford left the band to join Sting. The result of their union was a lengthy period of touring, on and off for some 12 years, right up until last year, and a band not without its own identity. It claimed *Dread* of the *Blue Turtles* album, but also the full length video of the making of that album.

Kirkland rarely recorded under his own name — just one 1991 effort as band-leader, and that since deleted — but his points less to lack of ambition than to a series of invitations to record and tour with others.

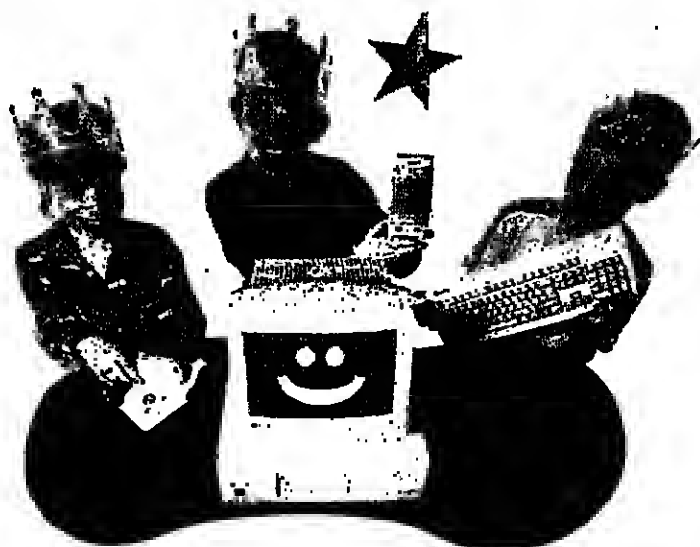
I saw him twice in the past year, both times as part of the quartet of the prodigious young alto-saxophonist Kenny Garratt. Their London date was fine, as fine as the intimate form of small group jazz can be, in a 2,000 seater auditorium.

But it was the New Year's Eve gig at Sweet Basil's Club in Greenwich Village which will live with me the longer. With 200 people squeezed into a room meant for 80, they raised the roof to such an extent that repairs to New York's skyline were all but necessary. Garrett was superb, drummer Jeff "Tain" Watts heroic. But it was Kirkland who stole the show, his hands running down the keyboard at breakneck speed, then retreating with a rare lightness of touch, all according to the demands of the tune.

His untimely death robs the worlds of both jazz and rock, of a towering presence and, by all accounts, one hell of a nice guy.

**Peter Moss**

Kenny Kirkland, pianist and keyboard player, born September 13, 1955; died circa November 13, 1988.



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## CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

**SOME OF** the figures given for British beef exports to Italy in 1995, Page 4, November 24, were wrong. The figures should have been 41,700 tonnes, worth a total of £126 million.

A PHOTOGRAPH accompanying a report about the lifting of the ban on British beef, Page 4, November 24, was captioned "Ron Barter, counting the cost . . ." etc. The picture, in fact, showed not the Ron Barter who was correctly identified in the report, but an unrelated farmer named Richard Barter, a slip by the agency that supplied the picture. Apologies to both farmers.

IN A REPORT headed, Heavy hand on hemp as Greece hits drug trade, Page 12, November 24, we said, "Last month police intercepted a train-load of mules carrying 200 tons of hashish across the mountainous border [between Greece

and Albania]." The following version might be better: "Last month police intercepted a mule-train carrying 200 tons of hashish across the mountainous border."

IN A REPORT about Prince Charles's interest in the British Archaeological School in Athens, Page 11, November 23, we referred to the discovery of the Minoan palace at Knossos by Sir John Evans. That should have been Sir Arthur Evans.

IN A News in Brief item, Page 23, November 24, headed, **Bosses' pay hopes muted**, we said that the average pay and bonuses last year for managing directors was £173,650 in companies with a turnover of more than £200,000. That should have been "more than £200 million".

**APOLOGIES** for calling David Mayer the theatre his-

torian, Donald, when announcing his 70th birthday. Page 15. November 23.

**PAT Koechlin-Smythe**, the showjumper, who appeared in the Birthdays column, Page 23, November 21, died in February, 1996. Apologies to her family.

THE HORNIMAN Museum, referred to in an article headed, Belle of Shoreditch. Page 10, G2, November 23, is not in Tulse Hill [London]. It is in Forest Hill.

**HOMOPHONE** of the month: In a report headed, Targets for devil worship, Page 3, November 24, we said that the name of a satanic goddess "had been daubed on the wall and a fire lit in the knave".

**It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as possible. Please quote date and page number. Readers may**

**URTI, Marston, G.B.E., F.R.S., on 24th November 1971, aged 82. Member of the Council, former President of the Society, father of Sir Ronald and Celia Urti. Emeritus Professor, University of Oxford. Emeritus Fellow of Brasenose College. Private funeral, no flowers, but donations if preferred to Sir Michael Sobell House, University of Oxford, 1353 T.1. (1353 T.1) Memorial mentioned at a later date.**

**SMITH, Gladys Mary, on 23rd November 1971, aged 88 years. Widow of Eric Smith, of Southwark, much loved mother of Ernest and Frederick. Thanking Service at St Mary's Church, Greenwich, on Tuesday, 27th November, 1971, at 11.00. To be followed by a Service at St Mary's Church, 11.00. 1181 624 4901.**

**To place your announcement telephone 0171 714 3852 or 0171 714 3977 between 11.00 and 12.00 noon.**



Financial Editor: Alex Brummer  
Telephone: 0171-239-9610  
Fax: 0171-833-4456

# FinanceGuardian

Strong pound and Asian crisis help to push Britain £2.5bn in the red

## Trade gap hits record deficit

Larry Elliott  
Economics Editor

**B** RITAIN'S trade gap with the rest of the world halved to a record level in September as the strong pound squeezed exports and slashed the cost of imported goods, the Government said yesterday.

Official figures showed that the combined impact of sterling's strength and the Asian crisis helped push the UK's visible trade gap £2.5 billion into the red — a worse performance even than that at the height of the late 1990s boom.

Officials admitted that the trend in trade was clearly deteriorating after the data revealed that exports fell by 3 per cent to £13.3 billion in September while imports rose by 5 per cent to £15.8 billion.

City analysts said the size of the trade gap shortened the odds on a further cut in interest rates next month to aid the hard-pressed manufacturing sector, which has been warning for some time that export order books have been drying up.

Adam Cole, at HSBC, said that trade was acting as a significant drag on growth. "As such, these data further increase the pressure for lower base rates, with January still the most likely timing, but December looking an increasingly close call."

Trade minister Brian Wilson said that the turmoil in the Far East was continuing to affect the overall trade figures, but he urged exporters not to abandon the emerging markets.

"Global economic problems, particularly in Asia,

continue to have a serious negative impact on the overall figures," he said. "We cannot expect to be immune from these events, despite the determined efforts of many British companies."

The shadow trade and industry secretary, John Redwood, blamed "Labour's monumental incompetence" for the situation.

"We have companies unable to export as much as before because of Labour's burdens on business, and people here are only able to afford imports," he said.

According to the Office for National Statistics, the trade gap in goods virtually doubled in September from £1.3 billion to £2.5 billion, with the partial figures for October showing an improvement in the non-European Union deficit from £1.9 billion to £1.3 billion.

Over the quarter as a whole, the deficit widened from £4.3 billion to £5.2 billion — the worst three-month performance since the second quarter of 1990, when the economy was poised on the brink of recession.

Britain's traditional strength in services helped to offset some of the shortfall in goods, with a surplus of £2.1 billion in September — the same as in August.

However, that still meant that the overall deficit in goods and services combined rose from £200 million to £3.1 billion.

Measured by volume, which strips out the impact of currency movements, yesterday's figures showed that exports fell by 2.5 per cent in September while imports rose by 4.7 per cent.

Excluding oil and erratic goods which have an unusual pattern of trade, exports were flat over the latest quarter and 1.7 per cent higher than in the July to September period of 1997. Imports rose by 4.2 per cent over the quarter and by 8.5 per cent over the year.

Among exports, only basic materials and semi-manufactured goods saw increases in volume, during the latest three months.

Exports of cars were down 7 per cent, other consumer goods by 6 per cent. For imports, cars rose by 54 per cent, capital goods by 8 per cent and consumer goods by 34 per cent.



Looking up... Michel Camdessus finds cause to smile while delivering his speech in Madrid

PHOTOGRAPH: ANDREA COMAS

## IMF chief says the worst is (nearly) over

Mark Atkinson  
Economics Correspondent

**T**HE International Monetary Fund's managing director expressed optimism yesterday that the worst of the global economic crisis which began in Asia nearly 18 months ago is over.

Despite downgrading the IMF's forecast for Japan, the world's second-largest economy, Michel Camdessus said the overall picture

looked better. "Is the crisis over? I wouldn't say that. We are listening now to some signs of relief... that the worst of the crisis is over. But we can't allow ourselves... a false sense of security."

Mr Camdessus's upbeat comments in Spain follow signs that financial markets have stabilised in the past few weeks as a result of interest rate cuts in the US and elsewhere.

Praising efforts by South Korea and Thailand to

reform, Mr Camdessus said recovery in those economies should begin by next year.

However, he said the Japanese economy was still shaky and could jeopardise recovery elsewhere in the region if it did not turn itself around soon.

The depth of the crisis in Japan was underlined by the IMF's two-month-old forecast for the country.

At the end of September, the IMF predicted Japan would contract by 2.5 per cent in 1998 before recovering next year to grow by 0.5 per cent.

Now, it expects the Japanese economy to shrink by 8 per cent this year and stagnate in 1999.

Mr Camdessus applauded Tokyo's efforts to stimulate economic growth by cutting taxes, increasing government spending and revamping the banking sector, but said he did not know whether that would be sufficient.

### Notebook

## Those pounding pains will linger



Edited by  
Mark Milner

**T**ENSIONS in financial markets may have eased in recent weeks but yesterday's UK trade figures, revealing the highest goods deficit on record, show that the real economic impact of the global financial crisis which began in Asia nearly 18 months ago is far from over.

Exports to Asia are continuing to run at around half their level of a year ago. Meanwhile, cheap imports are flooding into the country from the region.

But it would be wrong to pin all the blame for the widening trade deficit, as the Government seems intent on doing, on localised external factors. American aid, the collapse in demand for UK exports is across the board. Yesterday's whole-world data showed that the main reason for the deterioration in the trade balance was a sharp increase in the deficit on trade with the EU, from \$80 million in August to \$392 million in September.

This suggests the primary cause of the deterioration in the global trade balance is the strength of the pound, which has priced UK exports out of many foreign markets and made other countries' imports so much more attractive to UK producers and consumers.

Here the Government cannot escape blame. While the Chancellor has indeed tightened fiscal policy significantly since coming to office, not enough of the burden was shouldered directly by consumers, which meant that interest rates (and the pound) had to go up by more than they otherwise would have done. The appreciation of sterling was made worse by the Government's dithering over EMU.

Now that interest rates and the pound are coming down, exporters can look forward to some respite. But the long lags between exchange rate and trade movements suggest things will get worse before they get better.

### Unlikely mix

**I**N THE start-stop rationalisation of the world's pharmaceutical industry, Hoechst and Rhône-Poulenc do not look the most natural partners. It is terms of market capitalisation, to use an easily available measure, Hoechst is the senior by a hefty margin, which is why their putative deal is likely to focus on specific areas of operation rather than a full-scale stock market merger.

The key question is whether the combination that emerges from the negotiations will amount to more than the sum of its parts. Cost reduction, always a favourite

justification for mergers/joint ventures, looks tricky. News of widespread job losses does not play well on either side of the Rhine. And while a combination of the two life sciences business will create one of the highest drugs companies in the world, the pharmaceutical industry still remains sufficiently fragmented (despite recent trends) for it to avoid domination by, say, two or three players.

Nonetheless, Rhône-Poulenc's Jean-René Fourtou and Hoechst's Jürgen Dornmann still have an arguable case. Both are trying hard to shake off their chemical industry pasts. Hoechst is planning to spin off Celanese; Rhône-Poulenc has already floated Rhodia, though it retains a high stake. While overall size may not be critical in pharmaceuticals it can be extremely important within individual sectors.

For Rhône-Poulenc there will be an additional bonus. For the time being Mr Fourtou is making the decisions over the fate of his company but he must know that the company's share price makes Rhône-Poulenc a perennial favourite of the bid gossips. Hoechst may not be the most natural choice, but at least it is a choice.

### Power failure

**I**N CRUDE terms, National Power is swapping its best power station for £1.8 billion in cash — give or take the odd £100 million — and access to some £2 million energy consumers in the Midlands.

The strategy is certainly ground-breaking. The regulatory framework has yet to catch up, although National Power is unlikely to have to wait too long for that. Unsurprisingly, the management is upbeat, describing the company as a perfectly balanced, vertically integrated UK power company.

The stock market is somewhat more sceptical. It knocked the best part of 4 per cent off National Power's share price yesterday. Little wonder. What is National Power going to do with the cash it expects to get from selling the £2 billion-rated Drax power station?

It does not need that amount of money, or anything like it, to develop its newly acquired position in the retail market — a sector not exactly noted for the strength of its returns.

It could, of course, simply hand back the cash to shareholders. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with doing so. Better than that spending cash for spending's sake. But National Power's management might want to ponder whether shareholders will be best pleased to have cash they invested in power generation returned as the result of the sale generating assets.

If National Power has more up its sleeve then it should say so. If it doesn't, shareholders should be asking why not.

## Salsbury the top tip as M&S talks drag on

Roger Conner

**M**ARKS & Spencer's board was locked in a lengthy meeting last night attempting to resolve the leadership issue which has plunged Britain's leading retailer into an unprecedented crisis.

The company is expected to announce today that Peter Salsbury will take over next May as chief executive, the post held by Sir Richard Greenbury, who is also chairman.

Keith Oates, the deputy

chairman, is likely to be a casualty of this reorganisation. His departure would be the price for having pushed the succession issue into the headlines with his last-ditch appeal to the non-executive directors not to be overlooked for one of the top jobs.

The board is also expected to appoint a strong deputy chairman who would take over from Sir Richard when he retires, and to bring forward his retirement date by at least a year from 2001 — the date agreed two years ago.

Lord MacLaurin, the for-

mer Tesco chairman, confirmed yesterday that he had turned down an offer to be deputy chairman, and criticising the M&S board for failing to secure an orderly succession. He contrasted the row over the succession to Sir Richard Greenbury with the announcement of appointments at Tesco two years before Lord MacLaurin stepped down.

"The directors of Marks & Spencer, both executive and non-executive, have a certain amount of egg on their faces at the moment," Lord MacLaurin said.

The high-profile wrangling at M&S, which has dragged on for the past three weeks, has dismayed investors, especially at a time when the retailer faces severe trading difficulties which left it with a 23 per cent drop in profits for the first half of the year.

One institutional shareholder said yesterday: "It doesn't fill you with a lot of confidence. Something needs to be done pretty quickly. They do seem to be taking a long time to come up with a decision."

Another said: "Given the recent performance, it makes

an institution like ours nervous."

Marks & Spencer's non-executive directors, led by the prudential chairman, Sir Martin Jacobson, have been struggling for some time to build consensus over the succession. But the board has been divided over the claims of Mr Salsbury, who is a career M&S manager grounded in the clothing business, and Mr Oates, a rare example of an outsider with a financial and international background who was recruited at a senior level.

The issue has been clouded

by Sir Richard's apparent preference for Mr Salsbury and a reluctance to relax his grip on the company. He is believed to have considered Mr Oates unsuitable because he did not work his way up through the clothing business in the same way as Marks & Spencer's other senior managers.

There have been concerns, however, that Sir Richard's forceful personality and dominant position on the board would prevent Mr Salsbury from implementing necessary changes in the group's structure and organisation.

## Boardrooms ignore deadline to clean-up pay act

Bonus culture survives censure in key companies: Dan Atkinson reports

**T**HE backbone of British industry is drifting towards a December 31 deadline for cleaning up its act on boardroom pay. It prepared for the tough new regime and still rewarding executives regardless of their real performance, a survey has found.

Nearly one-third of companies ranked between 300 and 600 on the Stock Exchange continue to give at most only

sketchy details of how they pay incentives to top directors.

Executive share-option schemes are thriving, despite the cloud cast over them by the 1995 Greenbury report on corporate governance. More than 30 per cent of firms were still using these schemes, with many basing payments on the discredited yardstick of earnings-per-share, which is easy to manipulate.

Come New Year's Day, all companies will be subject to the Stock Exchange's combined code on top-pay disclosure, but yesterday's report from accountants PricewaterhouseCoopers showed a chunk of firms in the FTSE 300-600 range — seen as the bulwark of the stock market and the hub of future innovation and entrepreneurship — hopelessly ill-prepared.

In extreme circumstances, the Exchange will be able to delist companies that fail to comply. The code requires companies to explain their top-pay schemes and to show

how they conform to standards laid down by the Greenbury report and its successor, the 1996 Hampel report. Ideally, schemes ought to be strictly tied to the real performance of the business and be presented to shareholders for approval.

The report shows how far the large-company sector is falling to prepare itself for the new regime. About 83 per cent of companies in this range continue to offer annual bonuses to executives, despite such bonuses having been criticised on the ground that they do not

require shareholders' approval. In one third of cases, companies failed to give meaningful information as to how bonuses were calculated.

Executive share-option schemes "continue to thrive, in spite of coming under a cloud following Greenbury," said the report. Eighty-three per cent of companies surveyed were still offering share options, and of those companies that made public their performance criteria, 47 per cent said they were using earnings-per-share, not the Greenbury-approved practice

of comparison with similar companies. Just over one-third of companies surveyed used long-term incentive plans to reward executives, a type of scheme approved by Greenbury, but even here the criterion tended to be earnings-per-share.

Report editor Moira Conolly said: "Too many companies either do not link performance to reward, or are reluctant to disclose their performance criteria." From December 31, she said, "it will no longer be acceptable for companies to be coy".

## Secret out on drugs merger

Mark Milner

**F**RANCE'S Rhône-Poulenc and Germany's Hoechst yesterday revealed the pharmaceutical industry's worst-kept secret by confirming they are in talks to merge their life science businesses.

If the deal, about which the two companies kept tight-lipped until yesterday, does go ahead, analysts say it will create the second-biggest drugs operation in the world, behind Merck of the US.

Yesterday's two-line statement from the companies — which have a combined market capitalisation of \$27.7 billion — gave no details beyond confirming talks are taking place and that "no guarantee

can be made as to the outcome of the current discussions".

Such caution is no surprise in an industry which has seen the collapse of planned mergers between Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham in February, and Monsanto and American Home Products last month.

However, there are indications talks are at an advanced stage, with senior Rhône-Poulenc executives reported to be in Frankfurt to put the final touches to the deal.

According to the French newspaper Le Monde, the deal would involve the creation of a drugs business based in Frankfurt and run by Richard Markham, the boss of Hoechst's drugs arm, Hoechst-Marton Roussel.

### TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.507	Germany 2.737	Malaysia 0.28	Singapore 2.26
Austria 19.20	Greece 459.49	Malta 0.616	South Africa 2.81
Belgium 58.49	Hong Kong 12.48	Netherlands 3.078	Spain 201.65
Canada 2.488	India 70.48	New Zealand 3.02	Sweden 13.09
Cyprus 0.808	Ireland 1.053	Norway 12.11	Switzerland 2.57
Denmark 10.47	Israel 6.32	Portugal 275.48	Turkey 450.400
Finland 8.407	Saudi Arabia 8.11	USA 1.612	
France 9.153	Italy 2.724		

Supplied by Reuters (excluding rupee, shilling and malawi)



## Shoes are under par

EVEN the endorsement of Laura Davies, winner of last week's PGA tournament in the US, has been unable to boost sales of Hi-Tec Sports' footwear, writes Janice Warman.

Shares in the Southend-based firm fell 7.5p to 18p yesterday after it warned that it would make a loss in the first half.

Hi-Tec has been struggling to compete in a market flooded with cheap shoes as retailers make massive markdowns on top brands.

The group has made extensive management changes. US president Terry Mackness, who has been with the company for 16 years, has resigned and is to be replaced by Jonathan Caplan, president of Keds Corporation, New York.

Hi-Tec began to look for investors but initial interest from trade businesses and financial investors waned.

Trading performance in the UK has been good, considering the retailing slump and the order book for the second half is comparable with last year, said Harrison. But the US, which provides 40 per cent of sales, has performed badly.

PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JENKINS



## Drax for sale in power ploy

David Gow  
Industrial Editor

NATIONAL Power, Britain's second-biggest electricity generator, yesterday unveiled a significant and risky change of strategy by putting up for sale its biggest and best power plant and plugging into the domestic supply market.

It hopes to raise up to £2 billion to fund expansion at home and abroad and protect its earnings stream by selling off Drax, the 4000MW coal-fired plant in Yorkshire that

provides about 40 per cent of its output and accounts for a quarter of its capacity.

It also hopes to increase its presence in the open electricity supply market after paying the American joint owners of Midlands Electricity (MEB) £180 million to acquire its 22 million customers.

But the markets were not convinced and knocked almost 4 per cent off the share price which fell 22p to close at 537.4p. At one point National Power stock had lost nearly 6 per cent of its value.

Analysts were at a loss to understand why the company was to sell what Nigel Haw-

kins of Williams de Broc called its "jewel in the crown", the Drax plant fitted with expensive equipment to reduce sulphur dioxide emissions.

The planned disposal, said to have attracted substantial overseas interest, could cut National Power's share of the generating market from 21 per cent to just 12 per cent by 2000, raising City fears about future earnings and dividend growth.

Mr Hawkins said: "I can only assume that if you put your biggest and best plant up for sale you must have something up your sleeve. Perhaps

there's a hidden agenda with an acquisition in the offing that requires serious money."

Unions expressed fears that the strategy could affect jobs at both Drax, which employs 650, and at MEB, where 1,300 work in the supply business.

Keith Henry, National Power's chief executive, insisted the company had re-positioned itself to take advantage of sweeping changes coming to the energy market.

He said the disposal of Drax was necessary to obtain government and regulatory approval to buy MEB's supply business. But analysts said the price, effectively costing

between £20 and £100 per customer, was very high when profit per net consumer could be just £8 a year.

Mr Henry added that the "innovative" deal with MEB, owned by GPU and Cnergy, prefigured the split between the supply and distribution businesses of regional electricity companies (RECs) demanded by both ministers and the regulator, Stephen Littlechild of Ofwat.

National Power has ruled itself out of the £2 billion-plus battle for London Electricity, arguing that the price is far too high. But Mr Henry indicated that it was seeking to take over another REC and is thought to have held talks with the US owners of Yorkshire and Seaboard.

"We are getting access to supply customers and acquir-

ing a strong marketing brand without the need to take on a distribution business which is not good value for shareholders and could tie up £1.5 billion in capital," Mr Henry said.

But MEB's supply business made just £19 million pre-tax profit on £1.14 billion sales last year.

National Power has ruled itself out of the £2 billion-plus battle for London Electricity, arguing that the price is far too high. But Mr Henry indicated that it was seeking to take over another REC and is thought to have held talks with the US owners of Yorkshire and Seaboard.

"We are getting access to supply customers and acquir-

## TV group tunes in to growth

Julia Finch

MEDIA and leisure company Granada yesterday shrugged off talk of a downturn in consumer spending and impending recession and set itself an ambitious target for profits growth of more than 10 per cent a year.

Granada, maker of the Coronation Street soap and operator of the Meridian luxury hotels, unveiled annual profits up 13 per cent to £75 million and a 17.5 per cent rise in the final dividend. In a falling market, the shares rose 34p to close at 906p.

Chairman Gerry Robinson said the core businesses had continued to make progress in the eight weeks since the end of Granada's financial year. ITV advertising revenue generated from its Granada, LWT, Border and Yorkshire-Tyne Tees broadcasting regions is 5 per cent up on last year, and the company has booked 50 per cent of its budgeted 1999 programming sales. The value of new TV rental agreements has climbed 3 per cent, boosted by digital TV. Granada, which co-owns the ONdigital service, said it had had 250,000 inquiries so far.

The group said profits had been boosted by TV advertising sales during the World Cup and estimated that this week's decision to shift Granada at Ten to an early evening slot would add greatly to advertising revenue.

## News in brief

## BA signs for Iberia stake

BRITISH Airways and American Airlines will announce next week that they have completed a deal to buy a minority stake in Iberia, the state-owned Spanish airline, for about £240 million.

Josep Pique, the Spanish industry minister, jumped the gun yesterday by disclosing that the two airlines would end up with a 9 per cent stake in Iberia.

Sept, the Spanish state holding company, is selling a stake in Iberia as the first stage of the airline's privatisation. — Nicholas Barnister

## BT joins the Excitement

BRITISH Telecom has bought a 50 per cent stake in the British subsidiary of Excite, an American Internet company, for \$10 million (£5.9 million). BT said the stake in Excite UK would increase its involvement in Internet advertising and transactions, both potential online income generators. Excite, probably best known for its search engine, has developed a range of online services since its launch by six university graduates in 1993. — Nicholas Barnister

## Low note for CD company

TRING, the cut-price CD and video company, called in receivers yesterday after failing to complete a rescue deal with music promoter Harvey Goldsmith. The company has been in trouble for some time but promised at the beginning of this year that it had assured survival. Tring's shares were suspended at 6.5p, having once traded as high as 125p. But yesterday the board asked the stock exchange to cancel the share listing. — Roger Cowe

## Tate &amp; Lyle's sweet result

TATE & Lyle pleased the market despite full year results which it admitted were "disappointing". Shares rose by 29p to 44p at the close of trading, because the figures were in line with expectations after the group's profit warning in May.

Pre-tax profits rose from £159 million to £165 million on slightly lower turnover of £4.47 billion. — Janice Warman

## Carlton hires Asda director

CARLTON Communications, the London weekday ITV contractor, yesterday named Steven Cain, marketing director of Asda, the supermarket operator, as its new chief executive. He is start early next year.

Mr Cain, aged 34, will replace June de Moller, who announced her retirement as group managing director in September after 18 years at the television company. — Tom McGhie

## Free market discovers the poor buy electricity too

## Scottish Power wants the customers rivals ignore, reports David Gow

SCOTTISH Power has hit on a novel way of winning more domestic customers in the liberalised electricity market: it is targeting low-income households who are usually forced to use prepayment meters.

Normally, the main beneficiaries of free markets for gas and electricity have been higher-income customers who have won substantial rebates by paying through direct debit and are courted with price cuts by rival companies.

They can be up to five times

cheaper to serve than poorer clients.

Families on tight budgets and using prepayment meters have ended up meeting the highest bills. Consumer groups have accused suppliers of ignoring them and "cherry-picking" better-off customers.

Scottish Power, which has the highest number of prepayment customers in its home region and the fourth-highest proportion in the area served by its Manweb unit (667,000 in total), has teamed up with Eaga, a non-profit-making

body set up to promote energy efficiency in homes, to offer special help to prepayment clients.

"If we can change the economics of serving these customers," said Charles Berry, Scottish Power's managing director for energy supply, "we get them a better deal and we open up a sector of the market that's normally thought not to be workable."

Key elements of the scheme include free energy-efficiency surveys, help with maximising state benefits and advice on debt management.

Customers will get more regular meter readings, perhaps monthly, and be offered the chance to pay according to the time they use power

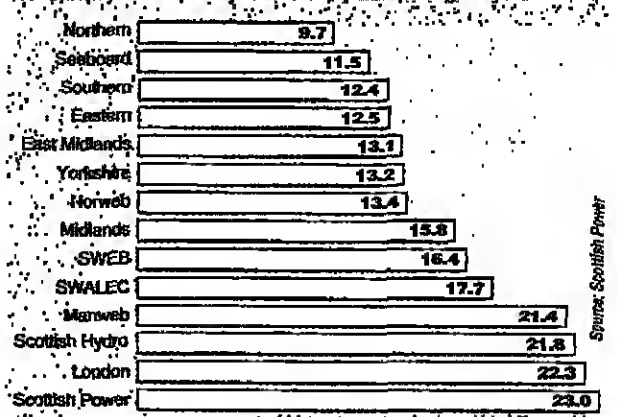
rather than units consumed. Some estimates say that consumers could save up to 30 per cent on bills.

A pilot scheme is about to start with 400 families in Inverclyde, south Lanarkshire, Crewe, Nantwich and Flintshire. Mr Berry said the aim was to spread it across both regions served and, ultimately, to the whole of the UK — and the gas market.

Consumers, he said, would get warmer homes and lower bills while Scottish Power could achieve significant savings by reducing the demands on call centres and the cost of managing and collecting debt while increasing the number of services provided to such customers.

## Power payers

% of prepayment electricity customers, quarter ending Dec 1997



## Sugar runs with the ball at Spurs

Julia Finch

TOTTENHAM Hotspur's highly-paid squad could soon find negotiations for more lucrative contracts short and sour after club chairman Alan Sugar yesterday announced he would be getting involved in the day-to-day running of the club.

Mr Sugar, who believes Premiership players are overpaid, is to take a "more hands-on" role at the north London club after chief executive Claude Littner announced he was stepping down.

Spurs made a £1 million loss last year and operating expenses climbed from £19 million to £25 million — with all but £600,000 of the increase down to higher players' wages.

"One of the main problems with football clubs is their high cost base, and if anybody can have a modicum of influence to stop them rising at such a high rate then maybe it is Alan Sugar," said one analyst.

Others said running the club was a full-time job and pointed to Mr Sugar's other responsibilities as chairman

of electronics and computer groups Amstrad and Vignen.

Mr Sugar's decision was confirmed as he faced 400 shareholders at Tottenham's annual meeting. A key agenda item was a vote on whether the club should be allowed to buy back its own shares — a move which would effectively use company cash to boost Mr Sugar's stake.

The chairman barred the press from the meeting, but a spokesman for the club said afterwards: "Buybacks are a complex issue and it had to be dealt with by the club might

want to do it, but there was no hostility to the proposal."

The spokesman stressed the club had only sought authority to buy back its shares, and would probably only use it if the price dipped.

Mr Sugar's spokesman said the meeting had been "very supportive" and that shareholders had applauded new manager George Graham.

The chairman's new role marks an about-turn. Three months ago Mr Sugar was reported to be tired of constant abuse from Spurs fans and considering selling his 40 per cent stake.

## Underside

Dan Atkinson

EUROSTAR's response to the wave of anti-privatisation strikes on the Continent is in the finest tradition of the Parnassus Way, ensuring that, whatever the cost, the passenger gets home. The Paris-London service finally limped into Waterloo around midnight on Sunday, having made an unscheduled stop in Lille to pick up marooned travellers from Brussels. Eurostar offered black cabs home to all and sundry. One passenger was Bournemouth-bound — the cable in question trussed £208. Another was heading for Maesteg, Wales. The fare can only be imagined.

THE Lord Chamberlain's Office — once the feared censor of London theatre — survives and thrives, we hear. Tynes and games group Paul Lamond referred its double-deck of

Millennium playing cards — each card representing a year of the 20th century — for approval by the office, because the 1977 card features the Queen, and royal permission is required for use of the monarchical image. Her Majesty was more than happy with the pic, we hear, but inquired as to why Edward VII was the sole monarch not pictured. Lamond moved quickly and Stravinsky reportedly made way for the century's second sovereign.



The deck will be on sale in WH Smith next year. AS CRUNCH talks continued yesterday on the future of Rover's Longbridge plant, a huge malaise was under way as registered customers of Britain's famous marque. The new Rover 75, the hump-along, was a head-in-head competitor with such top names as Volvo, Saab and Mercedes-Benz. Missing from the hit-list of the 75's competitors is BMW, owner of ex-Rover. Meanwhile, British taxpayers braced themselves to hear what they would have to pay BMW to host its Longbridge operation.

BMW is adept in such negotiations — it pocketed \$100 million from South Carolina five years ago in return for opening a plant in the state.

BUT there are limits, it seems, to even a businessman's appetite for a free lunch. The Department of Trade and Industry is to wing 100 small and medium-sized enterprise chiefs to Egypt on Saturday

for a merry freebie (sorry, "fact finding mission"), but there remain seats to be filled, despite the £250-a-head subsidy. Our entrepreneurs just don't seem to be attracted to this fast-growing economic hot-spot.

IN Altrincham, shuck waves from last week's courtroom exposure of a web of corruption spanning the UK's biggest car plants hit the blameless NES technical employment agency, Britain's largest. By happy chance, it shared its initials with the cleaning firm from which a corrupt Vauxhall executive extracted bribes, and has been bombarded with queries from clients. One ray of light: NES (the cleaner) has changed its name.

HURRAY for Oxford Street, which has shaken off the tacky Yuletide image of yesterday. Birds Eye and Tango sponsor the Christmas lights, while a gravelly American voice alerts shoppers in "British" Home Stores to the latest bargains. Well done, chaps.

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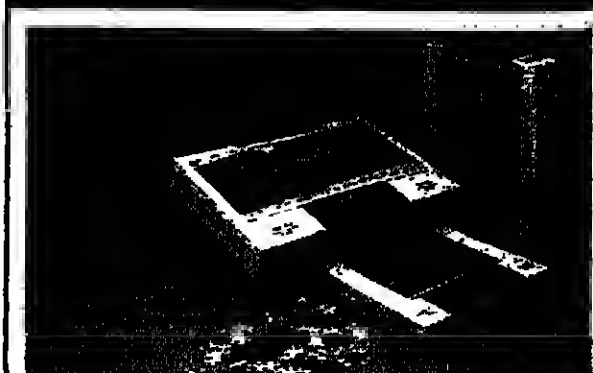
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## SportsGuardian

## Champions League

Group E: Arsenal 0 Lens 1

## Lens see off Arsenal's Euro hopes

Martin Thorpe at Wembley sees the Gunners fire blanks yet again

ARSENAL have been looking through rose-tinted spectacles in asserting that his squad players are up to the job. Last night a polished Lens conclusively saw through the Arsenal manager's blind spot as they effectively knocked his team out of this tournament.

With only one game left, the Gunners needed to win here but their lack of reserves left them short once again. A goal just before the half-hour pocketed the three points for Lens. On a cold, wet night in north London, Arsenal began their mountain climb with a team dressed in unfamiliar dark-blue shirts but otherwise eschewing experimentation.

Christopher Wreh replaced the injured Dennis Bergkamp up front while Remi Garde and Stephen Hughes were drafted into midfield in the place of the suspended Emmanuel Petit and the injured Patrick Vieira.

This reunited partnership that struggled to cope with the mercurial skills of Dynamo Kiev in the 1-1 draw at Wembley last month. The encouraging point for Arsenal in that game was that they did manage to create chances, even if, true to recent tradition, they squandered all but one.

However, Bergkamp played in that game, not Wreh. And one wonders what would have happened had the inviting chance which came Ar-

senal's way after just three minutes fallen to the Dutchman rather than the Liberian.

Ray Parlour swung in a cross from the right which bounced on to the chest of Wreh, unmarked and dangerously positioned by the penalty spot. Unfortunately his first touch let him down and the chance was squandered.

But the opportunity encapsulated a bright opening for Arsenal, who also might have expected better on 14 minutes when Wreh fed Nicolas Anelka on the left edge of the area but the Frenchman could not even hit the target.

A couple of times, though, Lens, a mobile, neat-passing side, reminded the English champions of their threat on the break. In the tie between these two sides in Lens Arsenal squandered a handful of chances, then paid the price by conceding an equaliser in injury-time.

The scorer was Tony Vairelles, a huge threat up front in that game who on the quarter-hour last night set up his striking partner Pascal Nouma for a powerful shot from 12 yards which, luckily for Arsenal, was directed straight at David Seaman.

Six minutes later Lens went closer still as Nouma turned provider to lay a ball back for Vladimir Smicer to unleash a 20-yard shot which Seaman pushed away with an acrobatic dive.

Almost immediately Anelka was set free on goal at



Slide rule... Frederic Dehu gains possession for Lens with a tackle on Arsenal's Marc Overmars in the Champions League match at Wembley last night

PHOTOGRAPH: PHIL COLE

the other end only for the Lens goalkeeper Guillaume Warmuz to come charging out his area and tackle the striker perfectly with his feet.

Despite their intermittent threat on the Lens goal, however, Arsenal once again looked lightweight up front. Attacking possibilities regularly foundered on the lack of bodies in the opposing box or poor passes and lack of control which ruined many a promising build-up.

A whole range of players were to blame — Hughes, Parlour, Anelka and Wreh — and the longer the game went on the more Arsenal looked like a side which had scored just

three goals in six games. Lens, on the other hand, continued to pose a more worrying threat on the break. Seven minutes into the second half they nearly scored when the ever-dangerous Nouma scooped a shot from six yards over the bar after being set up by Smicer's left-wing run into the area.

In one last gamble Wenger sent on Luis Boa Morte and Nelson Vivas for Wreh and Garde, and a minute later Arsenal so nearly scored. Marc Overmars, with a rare moment of threat, cut in from the left to set up Ray Parlour but from 20 yards he shot at the keeper.

But Lens had the final word as they took the lead on 72 minutes. Smicer wriggled his way on to the left of the Arsenal area and fired the ball across goal. Michael Debeve tapped in unmarked on the back post despite Arsenal claims for offside.

The game ended with ugly scenes as two players were sent off in injury time. First Parlour was dismissed for kicking Cyril Rool in the face, then, seconds later Vairelles was given his marching orders for a foul on Lee Dixon.

Arsenal (4-4-2): Seaman, Dixon, Adams, Keown, Winterburn; Parlour, Garde, Hughes, Overmars, Wreh, Anelka. Lens (4-4-2): Warmuz, Gilson, Magrier, Dehu, Lachot, Debeve, Smicer, Nyiro, Rool, Nouma, Vairelles.

Referee: A. Friis (Sweden).

## Dynamo prosper with late gift of Greek own-goal

AN OWN-GOAL by the Panathinaikos defender Angelos Basinas 11 minutes from time gave Dynamo Kiev a 2-1 victory in Ukraine yesterday in their Champions League Group E match in Ukraine.

Kostas Klassos's clearance from a corner struck his team-mate on the back and rebounded into the net to the delight of Dynamo, for whom Sergei Rebrov had equalised seven minutes earlier.

Panathinaikos had seemed to be making a big

stride towards the quarter-finals when Andreas Lagonikakis beat Alexander Shovkovsky from 12 yards in the 35th minute. But when Dynamo's substitute Valentin Belkevich found Rebrov with a long centre, the striker controlled it well before blasting home the equaliser.

Spartak Moscow squandered two valuable points when they were surprisingly held 0-0 by Sturm Graz in their Group C match in the Russian capital.

Having beaten the Austri-

ans 2-0 in Graz in September, Spartak now found it much more difficult to penetrate a packed defence.

Spartak must now win at the reigning European champions Real Madrid on December 9 to have any realistic chance of making the quarter-finals.

In Group F, Bobby Robson's PSV Eindhoven moved off the bottom by winning 3-1 against HJK Helsinki in Finland after a hat-trick by Ruud van Nistelrooij. Milka Lekhsone replied with a penalty.



Frank Keating

## Words failing the pedlars of rugby's Babel babble

WAS not around to tune in to on-the-spot dispatches from the Tower of Babel, but recent televised rugby union coverage must have been roughly similar. Last Saturday, via BBC from Murrayfield, prehistoric tones of BU McLaren were indulging in his obsession with international caps won. The following afternoon, on ITV from Huddersfield, a different Celt's dulcet tones were John Taylor's, describing (and despairing on) England's abject show. This Saturday the Englishman Miles Harrison will be doing the honours from Twickenham for Sky.

Live Five Nations television coverage will be either on BBC or Sky — before 1999's World Cup becomes exclusive to ITV.

Rugby's confusing squabble of market forces has reached the nation's living-rooms.

Relevantly, while bonny Bill McThursell on Saturday was intoning with spot-on solemnity the precise cap-count of McGo-and-so, the Sky rugby team was simultaneously warming up for this weekend and next with a live league run-out at Northampton — and that is the inference which can unquestionably be drawn from the production performances of these competing armies: that there is no substitute for practice, week in, week out, and it strikes me that the slickness, enlightenment and generally engaging "viewability" of the Sky rugby team's product is now streets ahead.

For in these matters, practice — regular, live, and "in the middle" — really does get you far nearer perfection. At football this season, for instance, Sky's terrific duo of Martin Tyler and Andy Gray will be at the microphone for all of 60 live Premiership games; and at rugby, Harrison and his estimable coxswain sidekick Stuart Barnes will have covered 60.

Minor point, it is no longer true that Sky's rugby (with, agreed, its lower viewing figures) gets none of the credit it deserves, for it has won the prestigious Bafta award for 1998's "best live-event coverage" — the first such win for Sky and against the serious nominated opposition of the BBC's Hong Kong handover and

Grand National and ITV's British Grand Prix.

The smooth gell and interplay — "mateship", the Australians call it — between the former BBC radio journalist Harrison and the former Bath and England fly-half Barnes glacially shows up some old-hat tandems at the mike.

"We're like two guys at the end of the bar just chatting about the game," suggests Harrison, and obviously that approach contributed to the Bafta gong, which was collected at the black-tie awards ceremony by the rugby producer and match director Martin Turner, himself youthful enough but actually the most senior producer in Sky's empire, having joined at the satellite channel's birth in 1994.

REMAIN convinced that half-rugby's players still don't quite understand the modern game let alone its rules (in England's case last Saturday, all 15 of them) and just belting it in, see what the ref might come up with, and then adapt or muddle through accordingly. The same might have gone for commentators, so the appointment of Barnes and his know-all certainties was inspired.

"The game Stuart embues about at the mike is the very one he aspired to when he was so recently the best fly-half in Britain," Turner says. "As a player he was an intellect and innovator, and the huge advantage he gives us now is that he totally understands the

revolutionary modern game as being a brand new concept because he was its prophet and disciple in the first place."

Most tabulated stats on outside-broadcast transmissions are phooey, but Turner's innovative "players' index" is compelling. The full tape of every Test the world over and each English Premiership One match is watched at least three times and scrupulously combed to log 16 different match actions by each player: tackle count, yardage gained, turnovers and so on.

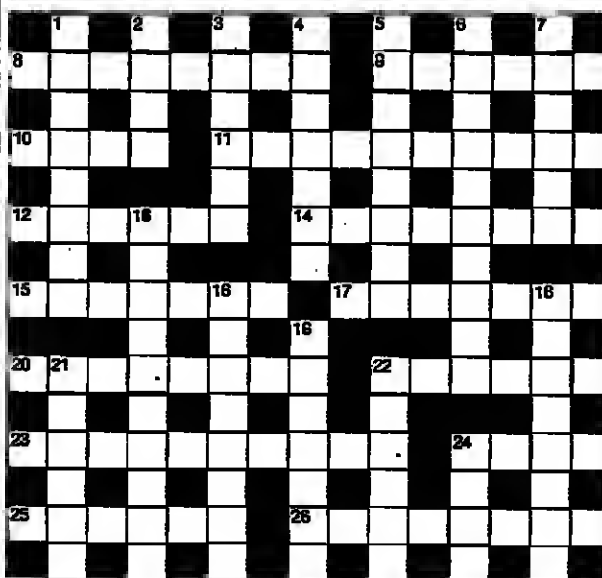
It has proved, for instance, how the tackle count of England's flanker Richard Hill is a phenomenal one; how the ball-carrying yardage of Wasps' Samoan hooker — hooker! — Leota shows up everyone else; how the hitherto unconsidered badge fontaine of Northampton had a work-rate graph on Sky so high that the Scotland selectors had to act on it.

"Clive Woodward demands a weekly copy of our index," says Turner. "If he's been watching a prop one Saturday, he can still check on how many decent tackles his prospective centres might have put in, or not."

As TV's head of outside broadcasts, Turner's late father Graham won a famous Bafta for his coverage of Winston Churchill's funeral in 1965. It is heartening, even in something as mundane as rugby commentary, how a new generation leaps so refreshingly to a brighter meridian.

## Guardian Crossword No 21,442

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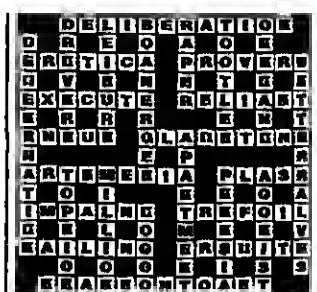
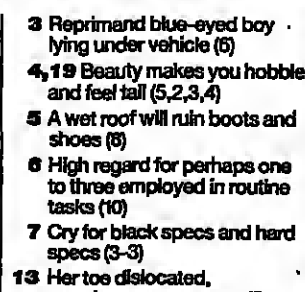


## Across

- 8 Handle to insulate in iron body (8)
- 9 Casual task for eccentric patriarch (3,3)
- 10 Punishment for friends who take the wrong turning (4)
- 11 Gas burner provides one chance when in jam (5,5)
- 12 Very fresh wine, peppery (3-3)
- 14 Businessman presents entertainment, the reverse of rubbish (8)
- 15,17 Silly accomplishment, getting moisture to break up her garden plot (7-7)

## Down

- 1 Sweetheart? (5-3)
- 2 Glance up and down (4)
- 3 Reprimand blue-eyed boy lying under vehicle (8)
- 4,19 Beauty makes you hobble and feel tall (5,2,3,4)
- 5 A wet roof will ruin boots and shoes (8)
- 6 High regard for perhaps one to three employed in routine tasks (10)
- 7 Cry for black specs and hard specs (3-3)
- 13 Her toe dislocated, promiscuous woman will follow another's ballet (10)
- 18 Quaker, half-embraced by Elton, will find this level (8)
- 18 Real dodo found in mythical city (2,8)
- 19 See 4
- 20 Sound of sailor looked in base (6)
- 22 Artist's material unveiled by a cory (6)
- 24 Nearly a thousand pounds for mum's mum (4)



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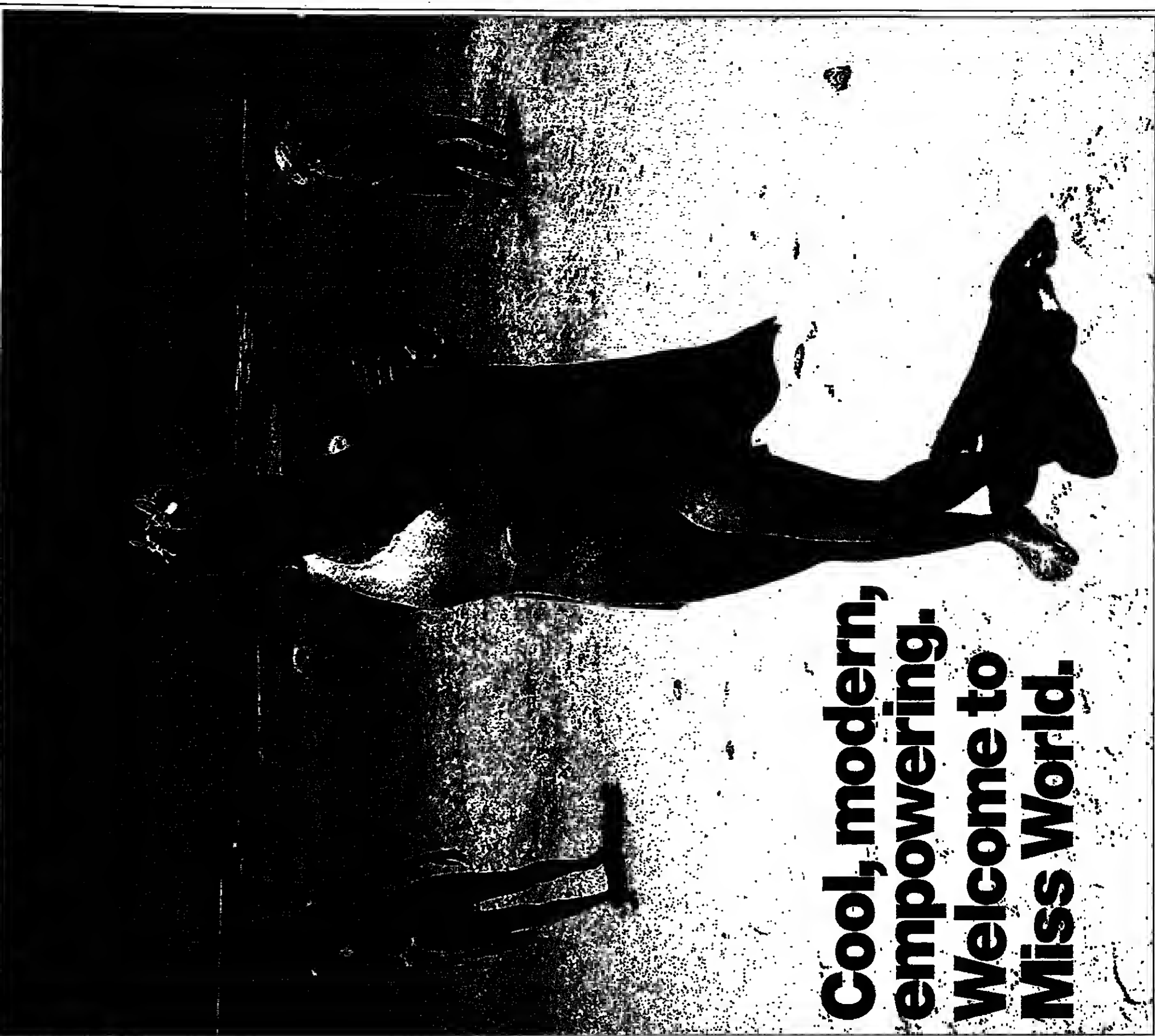
Continental

TYRES - ENGINEERED IN GERMANY



**Inside story**  
Would you die  
for one of  
these?

**The Guardian Thursday November 26 1998 Mark Lawson 7 • Arts 8 • Crossword 15 • Radio, TV and European Weather 16**



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## European weather outlook

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## Around the world

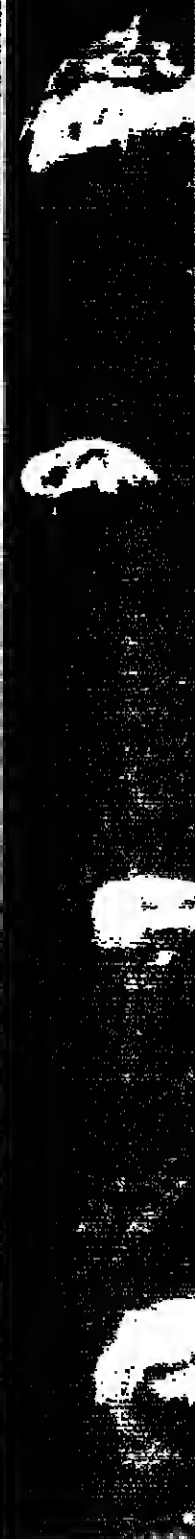
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## Forecast for the cities Today | Tomorrow

City	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030																																																																					
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Amsterdam	10	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-7	-8	-9	-10	-11	-12	-13	-14	-15	-16	-17	-18	-19	-20	-21	-22	-23	-24	-25	-26	-27	-28	-29	-30	-31	-32	-33	-34	-35	-36	-37	-38	-39	-40	-41	-42	-43	-44	-45	-46	-47	-48	-49	-50	-51	-52	-53	-54	-55	-56	-57	-58	-59	-60	-61	-62	-63	-64	-65	-66	-67	-68	-69	-70	-71	-72	-73	-74	-75	-76	-77	-78	-79	-80	-81	-82	-83	-84	-85	-86	-87	-88	-89	-90	-91	-92	-93	-94	-95	-96	-97	-98	-99	-100
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After 10 years in the wilderness, Miss World is back with a new promoter, a new image and an environmental message. **Decca Aitkenhead** reports

Miss UK is Immanuene Melougin, a florist from Liverpool who enjoys playing netball. She and 8

"I'm not going to be immature," she adds quickly, "because I see a mature person. I just didn't realise everyone would be like me." Another good thing is that it turns out the girls aren't competitive at all. "I know you'll think I'm just saying it, but you see we're all already winners by getting here. And there can only be one winner out of 86. She's already home. It's not like we chat about who we think will win every day, though. I just think: let's put on a good show for people!"

Normally when she's away from her mum, she gets homesick, but it's funny she hasn't been homesick at all here. In fact, she's really sad I will all soon be over. And she hasn't once wished she could relax and savor it without making up something.

Other contestants have spent the month in a hotel in the Scotchdale area preparing for the 47th Miss World finals, which take place tonight. It's still hard to get the contestants to talk about the evening's events, but they are the ones wearing 65,000 heels, foundation of a similar depth and an "atrocious" smile for almost anyone they see. Anyone who hasn't been put about that undercover judges are circulating checking out the authenticity of their sunny dispositions. Having got this far, the girls are taking no chances.

Miss World has more or less passed Britain by for the last 10 years or so ever since TV decided it was in longer something they cared to broadcast. The rest of the world has been less than keen about feminist wannabes, however, and the showroom gowns, garters and the showroom

Where constraints were traditionally required to parade men in unbuttoned and/or worsting swimsuits and athletes, pleading themselves to children and charity, this year we will see them break volleyball and dress up in formal trowels in

Leath from the Prodigy to be judges and from DMC to play live. Neither of those hopes has been fulfilled, but he is boundlessly cheerful, and leans about the place using words like "strenuous" and "the Sychelous poverthouse" a lot. The Sychelous poverthouse has also taken up residence

get, there are, of course, also the girls. "The girls," as they are universally referred to, have led a curious existence since they arrived. Each is disconcerted by a woman who functions as guarantor of her whereabouts, well-

The producers are firmly committed to the following opinions: Miss World used to be antiquated, embarrassing and sexist. This year it will be modern, cool and therefore the very opposite of what it used to be.

Poole's principal task is to promote the Seychelles to the world, and in particular to promote the island's being and ethnicity. The girls say they love being

and to succeed, it will be empowering. Everyone involved agrees that this presents quite a challenge, but the challenge is further complicated by the fact that there are so many people involved. There is Eric Morley, a wacky-eyed gentleman of advanced years who founded Miss World in 1951 and retains ownership of the rights. He can be spotted watching the girls from a distance, and looks rather like a sentimental old man.

**Birth babes . . .** on the beach (above) and (right) Emmeline MacLoughlin, the 19-year-old Miss UK

**PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRANK SPONNER**



PHOTOGRAPH BY  
FRANK SCHWARTZ


Miles UK

Black! bikini... on the beach (above) and (right) Emma Stone in the 18-year-old Miss UK

entertainment has also taken up residence in the hotel. In the form of the president's charming adviser, Gilbert Poof. Poof has been somewhat distracted this week by a British magazine report that at last year's Miss World party he got wildly drunk and shouted at the "fucking clappers" about their "pussies." He is periodically talking to his bed.

Poof's principal task is to promote the Seychelles to the world, and in particular to promote the island's

being about, well—and charmingly. The girls say they love



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# Making of a martyr

Last night, Barry Horne was on his deathbed, having been on hunger strike for 50 days. Will Woodward on a man who puts animals' lives before his own

Barry Horne wakes up this morning in York District Hospital, he will embark on the first day of his hunger strike. It's the third time that he has refused to take food since he was sent to jail in 1996, and on Tuesday he became so frail that he was transferred from Pull Sutton Prison. Friends convinced that he will continue his protest until he is no more. That may have happened last night, it may happen today, but they are certain it will happen soon. And what has led him to this? The Government's refusal thus far to appoint a Royal Commission on vivisection.

He has signed a living will stating that he wants no medical help if he loses consciousness. To force-feed him would be a violation of his rights, Horne has even appointed a friend, Coventry-based animal rights activist Alison Lawson, as his next of kin rather than his two children, apparently to ensure that his wish is carried out. He has been visited by a pagan priest, and his body is already weak from his earlier protests, which have yielded nothing. Horne Office Minister George Howarth has told Horne's MP, Tony Clarke, the Government won't give in to blackmail.

"I've got just the morbid, misery, agony," says his close friend Anneke Tibbles. "We have come to accept that he will die. And if he does the rest of us will carry on. We'll have to do more than we did before. God forbid any animal abuser on the day that Barry dies. If we have a martyr the anniversary of his death will be a day of action for years to come."

The Animal Rights Campaign, which is supporting Horne's campaign, launched the drive again: "It will be because of Barry that he will be the catalyst of a broken promise — a promise not in the party's general election manifesto, but in an earlier leader called New Labour. New Life for Animals."

but in an earlier leader called New Labour. New Life for Animals."

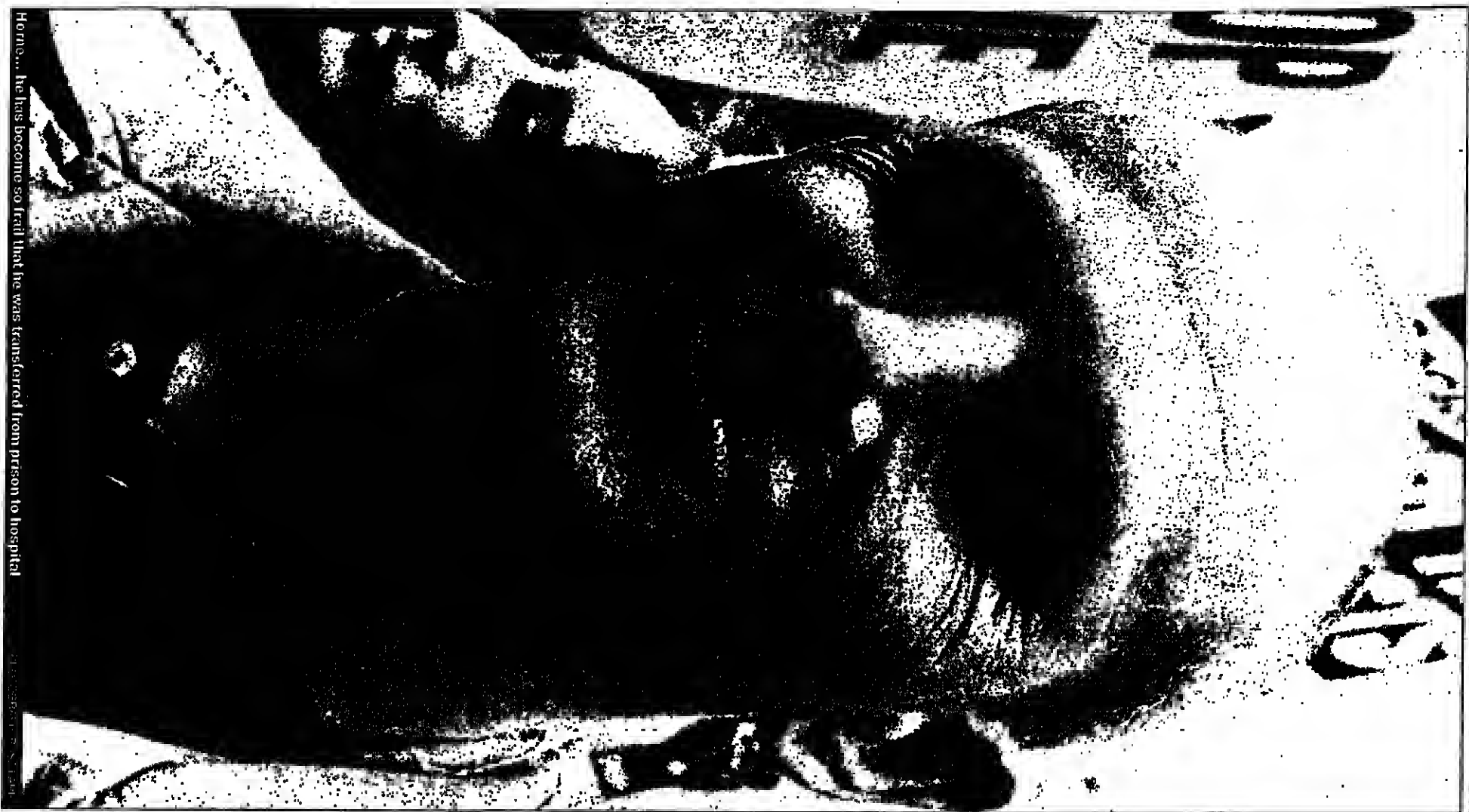
If he dies, 40-year-old Horne will claim a special place in the pantheon of animal rights heroes. He would be the first of a new wave of committed, zealous, animal rights activists prepared to die not in a clash in the field but on his own, in hospital in protest at government policy — an ordinary person with extraordinary determination.

But maybe he is not that ordinary. Barry Horne already has the distinction of collecting the longest prison sentence of any animal rights activist. If he survives, he will return to prison to continue serving his 18-year term for arson. He has only done two and a half years. "He feels his days of activism are over," says Tibbles. "I wouldn't like the idea of him sitting and rotting for 15 years. This is his last cause. This is all that's open to him. And he's done more in the last few months than he has in the last 15 years."

She is 35 now but she knew him when he first got involved in animal rights. He was from a working class background, living in the St James's area of Northampton. His dad was a postman. Though he had short hair, he was what she accepts they call a "grebo", into Pink Floyd and bling. Some of his friends have been arrested twice, and had a child by each wife — they are now both teenagers.

"He's very normal. He wasn't walking around with sandals and a beard. He had a job and he had a family. He just cared very deeply for animals. He always had dogs, old cats ones, which he liked best. In arguments he'd pay the devil's advocate — 'Yes a very thoughtful man'."

He left school at 15 and did various jobs. He was a bin man when he turned up at Northampton Animal Centre, about 15 years ago. The group is still going on a course of about 20



Horne... he has become so frail that he was transferred from prison to hospital

periodically augmented with whichever students happen to be around at the time. He started with them, going out sabotaging the Poshy and Graham Hunts in Northamptonshire. They organised a rooftop protest at Bouda that became a fiasco. As you gradually go into the political process, it doesn't work and obvious speak louder than words, says Tibbles. Some of them started engaging in direct action under the umbrella of the Animal Liberation Front, a group with no labelled membership. "If you stood up and said 'I am in the ALF' they would nick you straight away," says Tibbles. Several

**The anniversary of Barry's death will be a day of action for years to come**

of them, herself included, got arrested and did time. When she was in prison, Horne lived in a big shared house with her partner Michael in Northampton, but he moved out three years ago. Held on off on his own to do what he saw as the anti-life, says Anneke. In September 1988 he was fined £200 and given a six-month suspended jail sentence for conspiring to steal a dog from an aquarium in Morecambe. The police raided his flat in 1996 and found a pamphlet supporting attacks on shops with "intentionally lighting cigarette packets". He could not be charged but was put under surveillance. In 1996 it became clear that his "activist" were spectacular. He was arrested in Bristol, on the way to attending the Broadmead Centre. A year later he was sentenced to 18 years for arson causing £3 million



Toys are hard scientific toy collector Tim Rowett with his ever-expanding collection of Nihilo, Nihilo and the Naval Ordnance Laboratories, where it was invented in the 1960s. Bent at enormously high temperatures into a U-shape, then cooled and straightened, the metal's crystal structure and their original configuration and return to it is tested.

PHOTOGRAPH BY SAM SMITH

In half, pulling itself out of the hot water. "It's like Uri Geller, isn't it?" he laughs. The spoon's shaft is made from Nihilo, a composition of metal, titanium and the Naval Ordnance Laboratories, where it was invented in the 1960s. Bent at enormously high temperatures into a U-shape, then cooled and straightened, the metal's crystal structure and their original configuration and return to it is tested.

Nihilo has more than novelty value. A Californian friend of Rowett's, Roger Gilbertson, developed a Nihilo wire that contracts by 4 per cent when an electrical current passes through it, exactly like a muscle fibre. He has built robots that walk as an electrical signal contracts the "muscle wire" in their legs. Nihilo brought the right to put the muscle wire on the Pathfinder probe to Mars, to wipe dust off the solar panels.

Rowett has now produced what looks like an artillery-damaged yo-yo, he dartsed plastic shell is covered in thick layers of adhesive tape, and inside he has stuck a couple of magnets and some large ball bearings. He lets it fall and it yo-yos perfectly. He winds it up again, throws it out and, instead of falling gracefully, it tries to roll over itself sideways. He grins, but doesn't get the impressed response he expects. "I am thinking that like me, he is just not very good at it."

I should know better. It's a trick yo-yo that Rowett hopes to put into production. He's worked out the science of it, discussed the principles with German academics, and is reentering the patent. Although his small, sensible, grown-up side wants to keep his secrets safe, he is actually desperate to tell me how it works and, more importantly, describe how he will humiliate his victims.

"I'll stand in the corner of the room and watch them roll it up," he says. "I'll be able to tell whether it will rock or not, so I'll wave my hands over them, shout 'Abandon — work! or 'Don't work!', and the yo-yo will obey."

Although he believes in science, he means to say this like he means it. Something tells me I should leave now.

**The Grand Illusion** science toys with the illusion of science. Rowett's CD-ROM, *Think's Mindful Toys*

entwining various toys as well as serious uses in improving the visibility of life jackets. Of course, it may turn out to be carcinogenic, he laughs. Currently, his favourite toy is the Levitron, a magnetic spinning top that levitates above a magnetised base. Developed in the US, the really impressive ramped-up version is not yet available in this country. It stays up for around three minutes at about 10 centimetres above the base, a new addition, called the Levitron, applies a further rotating magnetic field to keep the top spinning — and thus levitating — indefinitely. Instead the

base and the perpetuator under the surface of your desk and all day long you can watch this top hovering and spinning just above your in-tray. The Seattle-based inventor of the Levitron, Bill Holmes, recently added a new feature. At this year's New York toy fair he presented the spinning top in a sphere with an eye painted onto it. He put the spinning sphere under strobe lighting that flashed in time with the revolutions of the top. The result was a levitating, starting eyeball. "It's really quite alarming," Rowett says. As with all these toys, though, the novelty is short-lived. "I sell most of

my stuff 'half-minute wonders' you get bored with them so fast," Rowett says. In 1991 Ideal Toys proudly unveiled the Skywriter, a stick-controlled with flashing LEDs, waving it through the air would produce a visible image. "When I first heard about it the pleasure of anticipation was enormous," Rowett says, "and when I got hold of it, I wasn't disappointed. But at the end of half an hour I'd seen it all. The Levitron still holds the endurance record — it fascinated Rowett for a whole weekend."

Rowett doesn't claim to understand or share the British attitude. He leads me into the kitchen, boils the kettle and pours the water into a teacup. Then he hands me a spoon. I stir the water and the spoon bends











## Consumer

**To buy or not to buy**  
The weekly guide to the products and services that are worth your money

### Cat food

**N**ot every cat is a feline. Some are more like dogs, some are more like children. And some are more like... well, cats. But when it comes to cat food, the choices are often bewildering. So many brands, so many varieties, so many prices. How do you choose? The answer is simple: you don't. You just buy what you can afford. But if you want to buy the best, you need to know what you're looking for. Here are some tips to help you choose the best cat food for your cat.

First, look at the ingredients. The best cat food is made from high-quality ingredients. Look for a list of ingredients that includes meat, fish, and vegetables. Avoid cat food that contains fillers like corn, wheat, and soy. Also, look for a list of ingredients that includes vitamins and minerals. This will ensure that your cat is getting all the nutrients it needs to stay healthy.

Second, look at the texture. The best cat food is easy to eat. Look for a texture that is moist and tender. Avoid cat food that is dry and crumbly. Also, look for a texture that is easy to digest. This will ensure that your cat is getting the most out of its food.

Third, look at the price. The best cat food is affordable. Look for a price that is reasonable for the quality of the food. Avoid cat food that is too expensive or too cheap. Also, look for a price that is consistent across different brands. This will ensure that you are getting the best value for your money.

Finally, look at the brand. The best cat food is from a reputable brand. Look for a brand that has a long history of producing high-quality cat food. Avoid cat food from a brand that is new or unknown. This will ensure that you are getting the best cat food for your cat.

**John Crane**

Let your boiler do the thinking: intelligent heating systems are the future. But make sure you understand the instructions.

**Bibi van der Zee reports**

# When the heat is on...

**T**he year is 2030 and the location a leafy suburb of Birmingham. It is a little chilly, dear? murmurs Diana (named after that twentieth-century icon, along with nearly every other girl her age). Charles (just a hilarious coincidence) shakes his head. "Can't be sweated, I can see the reliable condensing boiler working happily away at me from here."

A few years previously, they wouldn't have been available for domestic homes, but now people in the industry reckon that the future of heating is now. That means our armchairs to adjust the thermostat, never remember four weeks after summer has got going that we should have topped up the heat control on the boiler, and never ever again have to wake up in a freezing cold house after the frost has arrived without notice.

How? The idea of "intelligent" heating control systems has been around for a while, but it is only now trickling down into the domestic market. You can get machines that take the outside temperature and work out for themselves whether to switch on now, or in half an hour, in order to get your bedroom to the 21-degree comfort you'll wake up to. Some of them even teach themselves the heating pattern of your house so that they can make sure not a single inch of carpet will be cold on your bare feet as you trapeze downstairs of a morning, and then communicate by radio with the boiler to make sure that the boiler keeps up. And along with all this comes the promise of reductions in your bills of up to 30 per cent, as well as a shot at helping to save the planet. Nirvana?

Let us return, briefly, to how the whole thing works. The boiler, right at the heart of your heating and hot water system, pumps its water into the rest of the house through a variety of measures: the really old-fashioned ones used to work by gravity, the valve on the radiator, the can

## THE SATURDAY EVENING



**Ben Ames Williams - Isaac F. Marcossian - Octavus I Kenneth Allen Robinson - Nina Wilcox Putnam - D.**

other hand, already knows the amount of time the house takes to heat and will act accordingly, shutting down a little bit earlier to prevent overheating in a process that has been called optimum start.

This is the point at which the boiler energy manager springs into action as well: it anticipates how long the boiler is really going to need to be firing, and cuts it accordingly. These systems lead the Data term "thermostat manufacturers to reckon they can get up to 30 per cent off your heating bills; definitely not to be sniffed at. You can even adjust your heating by one degree (which is estimated to shave about 8 per cent off your energy consumption).

The problems, however, are not yet all ironed out, as one heating

The hot options

THE SATURDAY EVENING

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## Second thoughts

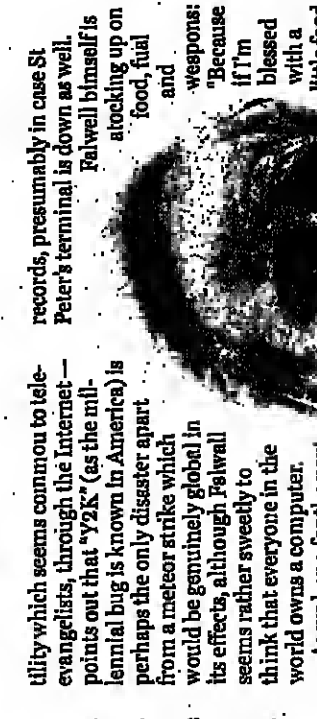
Mark Lawson on: Millennium bug prophets • Method acting • Stealing semen • Epic news

# In the laptop of the gods

**A**lthough Britain and America share the same movies, fast food and dream of a political Third Way, the culture gap between the two countries is still dramatically evident in matters of spirituality and emotion. For example, arriving in the States in late 1998, you are acutely conscious of the century running down. In Britain, millennium angst amounts to jokes about the Dome at Greenwich. In America, the crazies are beginning to circle the end of great December on their calendars in vivid digital red.

The Rev Jerry Falwell, king pundit of the Christian Right, has just announced that the feared "millennial bug", which may stall the world's computers when they believe that the year after next is 1900, may well be God's way of finally logging off. The unrocked, happy, carefree cash machines, laptops, mobile phones and other phone lines which useless computers might produce could herald a very modern apocalypse.

A Falwell video called *A Christian's Guide To The Millennium Bug* — sold, with an ideological ver-



**Rev Jerry Falwell**

records, presumably in case St Peter's terminal is down as well. Falwell himself is attacking on food, fuel and weapons.

"Because if I'm blessed with a little food and my family is inside the house with me," he explains, "I've got to be sure that I

can persuade others not to mess with us."

Like all prophets, Falwell risks looking silly if computers purr happily into the next century. In Denver, Colorado, one religious cult has just faced up to the problem of giving the world a day-by-date. Con-

erned Christians — a sect led by Monty Kim Miller, a former NASA scientist for Procter and Gamble — have declared that December would be swallowed in an earthquake on October 10. Miller's followers had sold their furniture and houses to prepare for this date. When the Denver Post proved to have no need to publish an emergency edition on October 11, Miller sensibly disappeared. We bear a great deal about the legalistic culture of modern America and so you might think that sect followers would sue Miller for the unnecessary disaster. But they won't. They are just waiting for the millennium to join a universal sect just to hear what it is doing.

Armageddon plan... the Rev Jerry Falwell stands ready for "Y2K" PHOTO: JERRY LARSEN

ing mental or physical disability. I had often cynically suspected that audiences and critics only know for sure that acting is occurring when the performer limps the available range of faculties.

And yet, watching Reeves, I undecoded the extent to which we may need that subliminal assurance that the actors are not the real thing. In Reeves' hands, the window becomes a movie not about mild voyeurism but a story of forced and appalling vicious existence. When his character watches a woman making love through a neighbouring window, Reeves's expression of regretful and nostalgic fascination is so powerful that the viewer begins to feel a voyeur as well.

This is method acting of its most extreme. A terrifying scene in which the character almost dies when his breathing tube slips out was — according to production notes — achieved by disconnecting Reeves's own breathing tube on set. At this point, the film began to seem like a well-meaning mainstream snuff movie. We talk about the "realism" of Saving Private Ryan but you understand how far from reality such descriptions are.

To say that an American made-for-television movie was at times almost unwatchable — and seemed to have virtually no acting going on in the central role — would normally be a cheap insult. But a TV remake of Hitchcock's 1954 thriller *Rear Window*, broadcast in the States on Sunday night, provoked these reactions in a way that was inescapably to its credit.

Hitchcock's plot depended on the immobility of the central character — a photographer played by James Stewart — who, confined to a wheelchair with a broken leg, keeps his professional voyeurism in trim by spying on the occupants of the opposite apartment block. The ABC remake ups the stakes.

The ABC remake ups the stakes, the actor performing to have a documentary representation of a quadriplegic. For this new version of *Rear Window*, featured Christian Slater in his first leading role since breaking his neck in a riding accident three years ago.

There has been a recent sentimental tendency in American cinema for actors to win praise and prizes — in movies such as *Rain Man*, *Forrest Gump* and *Sling Blade* — for impressively simulating

## Reality bites

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## Hands off my sperm

he antihumanist debate — which has been revived in America after the neo-Nazi Dr Jack Newton tried to provoke a legal showdown by releasing a video of an assisted suicide — is it any way? The latest judicial decision raises the less elegant dilemma of "Whose sperm is it anyway?"

The decision of Peter Wallis to sue his girlfriend for "intentionally acquiring and misusing" his semen when she became pregnant against his wishes — in a court case, Kellie Smith v Peter Wallis, the sperm makes a gift — is a combination of legal logic and cultural black comedy. The story is logical because it is true that modern fertility medicine has turned the male seed into a



**Method man... Christopher Ruess**

Thrifters are meant to be unsexed — and are supposed to provide intimations of mortality — but this Reac Window proved, for this viewer at least, TS Elliot's lines about humankind being unable to "beat too much reality". You would give Reeves an award for acting if only you could connect yourself to what he was doing. But perhaps this performance will have the effect of making movie stars think before they have their IQ or electronic mimicry the loss of a limb in search of an Oscar.

## And finally... a poem

A debate continues over the role of post laureate in temporary events, although it is probably too much to hope for a bandy epic called *The Ballad Of Monks*. Perhaps this is the solution to modernising the laureateship. Imagine Jon Snow handing over to Wendy Cooper, UA, for a "poem" over to you, Ursula. Thanks, Jeremy. The record has been moved to...

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NOTES AND THE LIES BEEN DOING THAT FOR 40 YEARS. Large photo. PHOTOGRAPH BY NINA WILCOX PUTNAM. THE SATURDAY EVENING. THE SATURDAY EVENING. THE SATURDAY EVENING.



Based on Nick Hornby's past-appearing autobiography *Fever Pitch* is a comic comedy about fifty-something Paul—a passionate Arsenal fan, Paul follows his team's progress keenly as they challenge for the League Championship, but the girlfriend, Sarah, doesn't share his love of football. As Arsenal's challenge falters, so does their relationship—only victory in a crucial away match can help. Sarah understands that football is more than "just a game" and saves their relationship.

in a newly revised version  
by Jay Presson Allen  
adapted from the novel  
by Maurice Spink

**Phyllida Lloyd's** *King Lear* is ingeniously staged, pulsating production.<sup>9</sup> Evening Standard

**Theatre**

A high-contrast, black and white photograph of a person's face, tilted back and looking upwards. The image is heavily stylized with a grainy, high-contrast aesthetic, showing the nose, mouth, and eyes in stark white against a black background.

## Theatre

an uninvited, ill-documented journey. The play, the terms of which are provokingly observed and written but plunges such a narrow tunnel that it can never be anything more than a pleasing miniature. Yet it transcends the cliché of the dried-up, middle-aged signifier, bantered with an elderly relative of uncertain tempo who blooms like a late rose with the touch of a man. It is not just the witling, but also the actress who is extraordinary, luminous at a time that breathes life into the hapless bundle of cordages and the sister that is Norway.

erly life. In a distant granddaddy town, her mother, the local boss, mases in St. Joseph's and chases a few dollars in the sweatshops, and meads and mags the lawless town, and meads and mags the lawless town. These two gentle, thin, and people come together in one place, a meeting of minds of fiscal policy, a meeting of minds that covers both the mind and the law that in play in which sinners and the lawless are created with the utmost compassion, everyone has the right to be an angel or a saint.

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\*\*\* Unmissable \*\*\* Recommended  
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